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ABSTRACT: "German Conduct of the War in Finland, August 1940 - June 1941"

As an integral component of "Unternehmen Barbarossa", OKW forces - in conjunction with the Finnish armed forces - advanced on objectives in the Soviet Union. The German objectives were never attained; Murmansk was never occupied, the Murmansk Railway was never effectively severed, AG Nord never linked with the Finnish Army on the Svir River, Leningrad never fell. Every German offensive strategic objective in the far north was unfulfilled. Despite the Finnish-German superiority of forces (sixteen Finnish and four and one-half German divisions opposed by six Soviet divisions) and tactical surprise, German strategy in Finland must be rated a dismal failure. And this failure can be traced to three reasons, all interlocking: the unnecessary division of command, the lack of sufficient forces and the dispersion of their efforts, the combat conditions - terrain, transportation net, climate - in the Finnish theater. If a unified command had been a reality, if originally planned forces had been available (if the defense of Norway had not been an obsession), if the forces that were available had not been scattered, one or more German objectives might have been obtained. Given these errors in OKH/OKW planning, the quality of the Finnish front precluded any exploitation of local advantages gained during combat.

Utilizing numerous historical studies and published and archival sources (primarily of OKW, OKH, and Auswartiges Amt origins), this thesis traces the course of the Barbarossa planning and concentrates upon the role Finnish and German forces were expected to fulfill during the initial strikes from Finnish territory. Commencing with the initial decision to eliminate the Soviet Union and the resultant first tenuous contacts with the Finnish military establishment, the Reich's growing interest and investment in Finland is tracked. Concurrently, the timing and circumstances behind the decisions of strategy, especially those that later proved disastrous, are examined. Interwoven with the chronology of developing military cooperation is the political/diplomatic situation where relevant. Together these facets form a pastiche of German-Finnish relations

in the period between the Winter War and the Barbarossa invasion.

Rex A. Martin  
May 1978

GERMAN CONDUCT OF THE WAR IN FINLAND

AUGUST 1940 - JUNE 1941

A dissertation  
presented to the Examiners  
of the University of St. Andrews  
for the degree  
of  
Master of Letters

by

Rex A. Martin

St. Andrews

May 1978





Declaration:

This dissertation embodies the results of the higher study undertaken by me on the topic approved by the Senatus Academicus of the University of St. Andrews in accordance with the regulations governing the degree of Master of Letters in Arts. I was admitted under Resolution of the University Court, 1967, No.9 to read for the degree of M.Litt. from October 1976, in terms of Ordinance D (Regulations for Higher Study and Research, 1977-1978, pp.26-30).

Rex A. Martin

Certificate:

I certify that Rex A. Martin has spent no less than two academic years in full-time higher study in the field of Arts, that he has fulfilled the requirements under Ordinance D, Resolution No.9 of the University Court of St. Andrews (Regulations for Higher Study and Research), and that he is qualified to submit the accompanying dissertation for the degree of Master of Letters (Modern History).

Anthony Upton  
Supervisor

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## Abbreviations---

AA = Auswartiges Amt  
Ab.Ausl. = Abteilung Ausland  
AG = ArmeeGruppe or ArmeeGruppen  
AL = Abteilung Landesverteidigung  
AOK = Armeeoberkommando  
B.Finn. = Befehlsstelle Finnland  
B-Tag = Barbarossa Tag  
DGH = Deutsche Gesandtschaft Helsinki  
DGM = Deutsche Gesandtschaft Moskau  
FBK = Flughafenbereichskommandant  
Fr.H.Ost = Fremde Heere Ost  
Geb.Div. = GebirgsDivision  
Gen.Kdo. = Generalkommando  
Gen.St.d.H. = Generalstab des Heeres  
Gr. = Gruppe or Heeresgruppe  
Ob.d.H. = Oberbefehlshaber des Heeres  
Ob.d.L. = Oberbefehlshaber der Luftwaffe  
Ob.d.M. = Oberbefehlshaber der Kriegsmarine  
OKH = Oberkommando des Heeres  
OKL = Oberkommando der Luftwaffe  
OKM = Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine  
OKW = Oberkommando der Wehrmacht  
Op.Abt. = Operationsabteilung  
Pol.VI = Politisch VI  
RAM = Reichsaussenminister  
SS = Schutzstaffeln  
WB = Wehrmachtbefehlshaber  
WFSt. = Wehrmachtfuhrungsstab  
Wi.Abt. = Wirtschaftsabteilung  
Wi.Ru = Wehrwirtschafts- und Rustungsamt  
WV = Wirtschafts-politisch V



Prologue: March 1940 - August 1940

"No country has displayed a more phenomenal capacity for beating ploughshares into swords [than Germany]." - John Wheeler-Bennett.<sup>1</sup>

On the day military operations ceased along the Russo-Finnish fronts, 13 March 1940, Field Marshal Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim announced in an order of the day to the troops of the Finnish forces that "the sacred mission of the army is to be an outpost of Western civilization in the East."<sup>2</sup> Brave words for a brave people who, since 30 November 1939, had resisted the might of the Red Army. Indeed this "numerically and technically inferior foe" had inflicted approximately two hundred thousand casualties on the Soviet divisions involved.<sup>3</sup> But the brave words could not wash away the bitter fact that the Soviet Union had triumphed. Nor could they disguise the fact that the Finnish state had suffered seriously as a result of the Winter War and the subsequent Treaty of Moscow. Twenty-four thousand nine hundred Finns were listed dead or missing and forty-three thousand five hundred were wounded as a result of the warfare.<sup>4</sup> The territories ceded by Finland under the terms of the Treaty of Moscow were inhabited by nearly four hundred and fifty thousand citizens;<sup>5</sup> the city of Viipuri and its port, the ports of Hanko and Uuras and Koivisto, the north shore of Lake Ladoga, the Saimaa Canal were surrendered;<sup>6</sup> the railway system was disrupted by new borders and loss of rolling stock and track; important timber resources and hydroelectric plants and pulp mills, as well as thousands of small farmsteads, fell to Soviet control. Of more concern for the Finnish government in troubled times, the security of the nation in the east had been complicated. The new frontier was longer, with fewer natural defensive positions, than the former and ran nearer to vital centers. Established static defenses were lost; the bunkers, trenches, automatic weapons pits, and anti-tank positions destroyed now lay in Russia. The Rybachi Peninsula, under complete Soviet control,

enabled the Red Army to "command the entry to Petsamo harbor," Finland's sole ice-free port in the far north.<sup>7</sup> And a Soviet garrison occupied the port of Hanko on the Baltic coast, west of Helsinki. The Finnish Army could no longer contemplate a delaying rearguard action, could no longer plan to trade territory for time, time to mobilize and time to gather support from sympathetic governments.<sup>8</sup> With the losses sustained and the new frontiers, the Finnish forces could no longer guarantee the integrity and security of the state.

Despite these realities, a sense of injustice animated the Finnish populace. Foreign correspondents returning to Helsinki received the impression that the Finns did not expect the peace to last. Open boasting occurred in the Hotel Kamp of widespread sabotage to factories in the industrial areas ceded to the Soviets. The important buildings of the capital remained protected against air raids by ice encased in wooden forms. The Army remained partially mobilized, still under the direct command of Mannerheim.<sup>9</sup> The Finnish High Command instituted operational studies on the feasibility of recapturing the lost territories; as early as May 1940, the plans for the "Hiitola Offensive" were complete. Ambassador Wipert Carl Wilhelm von Blucher, head of the DGH, summarized the prevailing mood in a telegram to the AA dated 13 March 1940; "since it is not to be expected that the Finns will resign themselves definitely to the new boundary, and since it is uncertain whether the Russians regard the peace as an interim phase or temporary measure, further tension in the Baltic region must be anticipated."<sup>10</sup> "Finland was simply taking a pause for breath."<sup>11</sup>

German neutrality had been conspicuous during the course of the Winter War; conspicuous for the benevolence displayed towards the Soviet Union. In the Europe of the Nazi-Soviet entente, Finland lay within the designated Soviet sphere of influence. Neither the AA nor the OKW were willing to tempt Soviet displeasure by any overt sign of interest in the fate of Finland. Germany was too involved in the West to be concerned with a small cold corner of the north. In the welter of Nazi bureaucracy only two departments of the AA, PolVI under counsellor

Werner von Grundherr and WV under Counsellor von Scherpenberg, were studying the course of events in Finland. Both departments, operating in conjunction, were considering methods of obtaining various raw materials, notably the nickle output of the Kolosjoki mines of the Petsamo region, for the expanding German war effort.<sup>12</sup> Prompted by Grand Admiral Erich Raeder Ob.d.M., on 1 April Hitler ordered Weserübung initiated at 0515 hours on 9 April 1940. Under consideration since 27 January, when the Fuhrer had ordered studies of offensive/defensive options for Germany in Scandinavia, the OKW-directed assault was swift and sure. Finland now faced a new political reality. On the outcome of the German invasion would depend whether Finland was to retain any freedom of action. This extended even to the Finnish economy; as von Blucher noted in a telegram to Berlin on 19 April, if Norway were occupied by the Wehrmacht Finnish overseas trade would come "under complete German control."<sup>13</sup> A new Realpolitik began to invade the policy of Finland in its relations with the Nazi Reich. During a brief conversation with the Finnish envoy to Berlin, Aarne Wuorimaa, on 26 April Ernst von Weizsacker, State Secretary of the AA, perceived "the conspicuous desire of the minister to restore the intimate relationship which he maintained with us previously."<sup>14</sup> And as von Blucher reported a few days later from Helsinki, the latest news from Norway had "impressed Finnish public opinion deeply."<sup>15</sup> On 18 May the 2nd Geb.Div. under Feurstein was ordered from Drontheim to positions in north Norway.<sup>16</sup> Battered Finland now lay bounded by a hostile Soviet Union and an indifferent German Reich. As a report prepared by the WV stated, Finland retained only one tenuous route to the Western powers that was not dominated by the Nazi-Soviet entente, the ice-free port of Liinahamari.<sup>17</sup>

The Helsinki government obviously decided that the best method of maintaining existence in the new Europe was to counter Soviet pressure by obtaining tacit German patronage. Initially they attempted to gain surplus Wehrmacht arms and munitions to supplement the depleted stocks of the Finnish Army in exchange for vital raw materials. During the 28 March AA conference on Finnish resources, it



was revealed that arrangements had been made to send Counsellor Karl Schnurre and Senior Civil Servant Waldemar Ludwig to Helsinki for negotiations aimed at securing iron pyrites, nickel<sup>el</sup>, copper, and molybdenum.<sup>18</sup> Schnurre reported on the course of negotiations, concluded on 6 May, at a conference on commercial policy in Berlin on 16 May. The Finnish government was willing to supply the materials desired if technical and diplomatic issues could be agreed upon; however, "it will probably become necessary, in return, also to supply war material to the Finns at least in a limited amount. The military aspect of the question will be studied by the OKW, as soon as details of the Finn's wishes are available. Meanwhile, the Foreign Ministry will ascertain whether the authoritative quarters have any objections, on political grounds, to war material being supplied to Finland."<sup>19</sup> On 21 May RAM Joachim von Ribbentrop discussed the matter with Hitler. The Fuhrer, aware of the developing offensive in the west and the necessity of keeping the Soviet Union pacified, decided that deliveries of arms "to Finland are at present out of the question. It could not be foreseen at the moment when this attitude might undergo a change."<sup>20</sup> The WiRu was duly informed of the decree. The opening Finnish gambit had failed. For the Third Reich, Soviet amity was still preferable to Finnish.

Ambassador von Blucher reported Soviet moves in the far north that could threaten the German position. On 10 June the Norwegian armed forces capitulated. Due to logistic difficulties, Wehrmacht forces had not yet advanced north of Narvik, leaving the vast province of Finnmark - which adjoined the Petsamo region - unoccupied. A few kilometers east of Finnmark Soviet troops stood combat-ready; it was rumored that the Red Army planned to advance into this military vacuum. On 11 June, von Blucher reported to the Wilhelmstrasse of the fears of the Finnish General Staff that the Soviet Union was considering the acquisition of Finnmark via Petsamo. The Military Attache in the DGH, Colonel Horst Rossing, had been informally told by Finnish officers that they hoped the Wehrmacht would hasten to reach the Norwegian-Finnish border, currently held by two Norwegian infan-

try battalions.<sup>21</sup> Colonel Erich Buschenhagen, Chief of Staff AOK Norwegen, ordered that the Norwegian border battalions be placed under direct German command. On 12 June, Colonel Buschenhagen reported that the Norwegian High Command feared a Soviet occupation of the area and had requested that an OKW garrison assume responsibility for the security of the region. He requested permission to dispatch a Waffen SS unit to the border immediately; he followed this request with a cable to the OKW stating that Soviet troops were assembling along the Murman coast for the purpose of advancing into Finnmark, information originating with the Finnish General Staff. The OKW, however, doubted the interpretation of this intelligence and refused to hastily reinforce the area.<sup>22</sup> The entire incident shows the nature of concern displayed by German personnel, both diplomatic and military, towards Soviet intentions in the north.

On 18 June von Blucher noted the Finnish reaction to the collapse of France, "Recognition of the German leadership and of German soldiers finds spontaneous expression everywhere. Mixed in are voices which speak of a new and better Europe and perceive in a German hegemony a guarantee against the danger from the east."<sup>23</sup> The leaders of the conservative Coalition Party urged that the Finnish government take an "undemonstratively" sympathetic stance with regard to the German Reich and be most cooperative in all negotiations with Berlin.<sup>24</sup> Trade talks between Finland and Germany progressed amiably. Von Blucher reported that the Foreign Minister of Finland, Rolf Witting, was so disposed towards him that they met almost daily to confer with each other in perfect confidence and candor.<sup>25</sup> During one such conversation, Witting voiced doubts about the suitability of his envoy in Berlin in the developing atmosphere. He was of the opinion that "Wuorimaa was not sufficiently active"; perhaps a new representative should be dispatched to Berlin in view of the "new attitude to Germany," perhaps someone like Toivo M. Kivimaki.<sup>26</sup> Kivimaki was evaluated by von Blucher as one of Finland's most capable and respected statesmen, an expert on German affairs, and "the Finnish politician best suited to represent Finland in Germany."<sup>27</sup> To be concise,

Toivo Kivimaki was an ardent Germanophile. On 6 May the Finnish government was informed that the German Reich would be pleased to welcome Kivimaki as the Finnish envoy in Berlin. With Witting in Helsinki and Kivimaki in Berlin, Finland's political and economic reorientation toward the Nazi Reich was to proceed unerringly.

In June came warnings of the threat Soviet military presence in Europe presented to the German Reich and information of a gradual Soviet military buildup by General Ludwig Beck, former Chief of the Gen.St.d.H., and Hasso von Etzdorf, AA Liaison Officer to the OKH. Colonel General Franz Halder, current head of the Gen.St.d.H., met at the end of the month with von Weizsacker, who briefed him on Hitler's view of the political situation. Attention was now focused on the east, von Weizsacker explained; this was not due to recent Soviet expansion, but rather was an integral component of Hitler's grand strategy.<sup>28</sup> Field Marshal Walter von Brauchitsch Ob.d.H. directed Halder to introduce planning - simultaneous with but secondary to OKH planning directed against Great Britain - on "how a military blow against Russia is to be executed to induce her to recognize the dominant role of Germany in Europe."<sup>29</sup> Von Brauchitsch, flushed with victory and impatient to prove that the OKH could complete the establishment of a German hegemony over Europe, declared that the "OKH shall not be caught unprepared."<sup>30</sup> The initial operational planning for the eastern campaign began on 3 July 1940 when Halder ordered Colonel Hans von Greiffenberg of the Op.Abt. of the Gen.St.d.H. to study "how to deliver a military blow at Russia."<sup>31</sup>

When von Brauchitsch arrived for the Fuhrer Conference on 21 July, Hitler was unaware of OKH planning. Thus, he approached the subject of an offensive in the east guardedly, presenting it as a preventive strike. According to Halder, a draft was submitted to Hitler immediately outlining the concentration, objectives, and comparative strengths for an autumn campaign into Soviet territory.<sup>32</sup> An optimistic proposal, it suggested that by utilizing eighty to one hundred divisions Germany could easily defeat the Red Army before winter fell, allowing



four to six weeks for the concentration of forces. The military aims were loosely expressed as "the defeat of the Russian army or the capture of at least as much Russian territory as necessary to prevent enemy air attacks against Berlin and the Silesian industrial areas."<sup>33</sup> The discussion that followed the presentation of the study indicated three operational routes - "Finland, Baltic States, Ukraine."<sup>34</sup> Finland's assumed cooperation would be profitable for the Finns; parts of northern Russia were to be surrendered to their control.<sup>35</sup> After the offensive was successfully concluded, Finland was to become a link in a chain of buffer states meant to stretch from the White Sea to the Black Sea.<sup>36</sup> Hitler ordered the planning to be continued. This did not mean, however, that an irrevocable decision to launch a military campaign had been taken.<sup>37</sup> But it did mean that Finland's position, due to the possibility of military collaboration, was reevaluated. Now, as a potential staging area for a German assault, the patronage sought by the Finnish government was to be initiated, with all due caution.

On 26 July, after examining new material on Soviet dispositions presented by Colonel Eberhard Kinzel of Fr.H.Ost, Halder concluded that the most favorable operation would be a thrust along the Baltic coast swinging south via Moscow to strike the forces in the Ukraine. When von Greiffenberg presented a recommendation for a more realistic approach with the primary blow in the Ukraine, Halder repeated his preference for an enormous flanking operation. The Finnish Army would perforce be of extreme importance in the offensive envisioned by Halder. In this rudimentary plan the Finnish armed forces, with supportive Luftwaffe airpower and specialist land units, were to strike the Soviet forces to the south and southeast, advancing on Leningrad and the Svir River simultaneously with the advance of the main Wehrmacht forces through the Baltic States. After linking with the OKH forces, the Finns were to provide flank security against Soviet forces to the east during the massive southern envelopment. On 29 July Halder decided to seek a further opinion and summoned Major General Erich Marcks, Chief of Staff 18th Army, and charged him with the conduct of an independent feasibility

ity study for an eastern strike.<sup>38</sup>

Shortly after the 21 July conference Hitler requested the views of Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, head of the OKW, and General Alfred Jodl, head of the WFST., for their views on the proposed offensive; in a memorandum signed by Keitel and probably drafted by Jodl, they replied that time, space, and weather factors rendered an autumn attack on Soviet Russia "totally impracticable."<sup>39</sup>

On 31 July 1940 von Brauchitsch, Halder, Raeder, Keitel, and Jodl gathered at the Berghof for yet another Fuhrer Conference. Hitler, although the OKL was not represented, gave orders for the commencement of a massive air offensive against Great Britain. He then announced that "Russia must be defeated in the course of this struggle. Spring 1941."<sup>40</sup> In Hitler's view, "the winning of a certain area would not be enough." The strategic aim must be "the destruction of Russia's vital power." Further, the operation would make sense only if this aim could be achieved in a single campaign completed in five months. The Fuhrer envisioned two main thrusts, one towards Kiev and down the Dnieper and one through the Baltic States and towards Moscow.<sup>41</sup> The OKH was to be increased to one hundred eighty full divisions and Rumanian and Finnish forces were to be strengthened. Halder noted that Finland's attitude remained to be seen, but if willing to cooperate, the Finnish Army would presumably advance towards the White Sea.<sup>42</sup> For German forces operating on or from Finnish territory only three operational possibilities were feasible - namely, an advance on the Murmansk Railway, the occupation and defense of Petsamo, and a strike across the southeast border into the extended Soviet right flank.<sup>43</sup> The conference led the OKH/OKW to seek methods of increasing the ability of potential allies, Finland and Rumania, to resist Soviet pressure while at full military expansion themselves.<sup>44</sup>

The "potential ally" was still attempting to gain German attention; "the eyes of leading Finnish statesmen are turning to Berlin."<sup>45</sup> On 4 July Witting, during a conversation with von Blucher, informed the Ambassador that popular sentiment amiable to the Reich was developing "in avalanche proportions." Efforts

to form a government oriented exclusively towards Berlin were progressing. Public opinion was influenced by the firm belief that Finland, supported by German arms, could recover the lost territories. This general opinion had been encouraged by correspondence and discussion between private citizens of the two nations.<sup>46</sup> Von Blucher was cautious, replying that, in his personal opinion, Germany would respect all agreements with the Soviet Union; he stated that a government which cooperated secretly but which was outwardly distant and reserved would be preferable to one with an obvious pro-German bias.<sup>47</sup> Between 29 July and 14 August Kivimaki paid several visits to the Wilhelmstrasse in an effort to determine Nazi interest. He expressed his "grave concern for the future of his country" to Ernst Woermann.<sup>48</sup> He attempted to question von Weizsacker on German policy in the event of any renewed Soviet-Finnish conflict. He visited Woermann and "repeatedly brought up the question of whether we [Germany] would not support Finland ... in case of a renewed advance on the part of the Soviet Union."<sup>49</sup> Kivimaki was unaware, as was the DGH, that German support had already been decided upon by this point. On 2 August, von Blucher reported that Finnish leaders might be prepared to agree to "a considerable curtailment to the sovereignty of their country in favor of Germany."<sup>50</sup>

Major General Marcks submitted his plan of operations on 5 August. Marcks recognized the significance of the Murmansk Railway; but he envisioned a massive concentration of Wehrmacht forces in the central and southern sectors of the front, leaving northern Russia and, thus, Finnish participation out of the first phase of operations. Marcks recommended postponing the decision on whether or not to attempt to gain Finnish cooperation to a later stage in planning.<sup>51</sup> On 9 August the OKW issued the preliminary order "Aufbau Ost" that began the general shift of the Wehrmacht eastwards, including units in the north.<sup>52</sup> Aufbau Ost was "entirely camouflaged, not mentioning the USSR nor the eventual attack."<sup>53</sup> In July 1940 an SS <sup>t</sup>bat<sub>+</sub>al<sub>+</sub>ion under Lieutenant Colonel Reitz had moved into the Kirkenes region.<sup>54</sup> On 13 August Hitler returned to Berlin; on 14 August he met with



Colonel General Nikolaus von Falkenhorst, WB Norwegen, and ordered him to shift the entire Gebirgskorps (comprising the 2nd and 3rd Geb.Div. with support units) to occupy the northern region.<sup>55</sup> The next day von Falkenhorst passed these orders to General Eduard Dietl, Commander Gebirgskorps;<sup>56</sup> in days the 136th Jager Regiment was installed in the Kirkenes-Tana sector only a few kilometers from the Finnish border.<sup>57</sup> The OKL was ordered to establish combat airbases in the northern region.<sup>58</sup>

The OKW viewed the strengthening of the Finnish forces as a prime prerequisite to creating a viable offensive force for any joint Finnish-German operation. Amid rumors of a threatened Soviet offensive against Finland,<sup>59</sup> the decision was made. Keitel informed von Weizsacker on 12 August that the Fuhrer had given permission that an arms contract between the Danish firm Madsen and the Finnish Army, interrupted by the occupation of Denmark in April, be completed with German approval.<sup>60</sup> But more than the limited munitions supplied by Madsen were needed. At the end of June and again at the beginning of August, W. Hilbert of the Finnish firm Dahberg and Hilbert had travelled privately to Germany to contact Joseph Veltjens, a retired pilot now in the arms export trade, in an attempt to purchase arms and munitions. Martti V. Tera, retired from the Finnish military establishment and associated with Dahberg and Hilbert, supplied Hilbert with a list of materials desired by the Finnish armed forces which Hilbert made known to Veltjens.<sup>61</sup>

Veltjens had flown with the celebrated Richthofen Jagdgeschwader and thus served under the command of Hermann Goring during the 1917-1918 period. Following the First World War Veltjens entered the financial world and soon founded J. Veltjens Waffen und Munition and Aschpurvis und Veltjens, a marine transport enterprise. Veltjens initiated and maintained close commercial ties with Finland and was involved in supplying thirty 20-mm anti-aircraft guns with ammunition in October 1939. On several occasions during the Winter War Veltjens attempted to persuade Goring, now Reichsmarschall and Ob.d.L., to intercede with Hitler to lift

the ban on arms to Finland, even as late as mid-February 1940. Thus, on 14 August when Hitler discussed the Finnish situation and the decision to aid the Finns in rearming with Goring, Goring immediately offered the services of Veltjens as an agent - a Sondermissar - to open negotiations.<sup>62</sup> The same day General Georg Thomas, head of the WiRu, recorded, "with Herr Veltjens present, deliveries to Finland were discussed. The Reichsmarschal explained that the Fuhrer wished speedy and extensive deliveries to Finland, since he did not want to give the Finns over to the Russians. Veltjens was instructed to inform Mannerheim and, after clarification of the situation, to communicate the wishes of the Finns to the Armaments Office [WiRu]. Transportation would be mainly on the ships carrying Swedish ore. Veltjens was also to request from Mannerheim that we be permitted to transport flak units through Finland on the highway from Petsamo to Kirkenes. At the desire of the Fuhrer there should be made available to the Finns as a first priority antitank mines in large quantity for antitank defense."<sup>63</sup> The request for a transit of Finnish territory by OKL personnel and equipment seems to have been proposed by Goring to alleviate the transport difficulties encountered by the order to establish OKL defenses in remote northern Norway. The twin facets of Veltjens' mission were not conditional upon each other; the arms offer was not linked to the transit proposal at any stage.<sup>64</sup> Veltjens had been ordered to demand an audience solely with Mannerheim. Why the Field Marshal and not a member of the government? Hitler obviously felt, for this stipulation had been his, that Mannerheim was less likely to allow politics to enter the considerations and, perhaps, felt that the military would be more apt to maintain the secrecy the affair demanded.<sup>65</sup>

On 15 August Veltjens visited the Finnish embassy in Berlin. There he informed Kivimaki of his mission, stressed the secrecy necessary, and requested that an audience with Mannerheim be arranged for 18 August. He also requested that a letter of introduction to Mannerheim be dispatched. Kivimaki complied. The letter informing Mannerheim of the Veltjens visit arrived on 17 August, de-

livered personally by a Baron Wrede.<sup>66</sup> While Veltjens had requested to meet with Mannerheim solely and, thus, for the Finnish envoy to communicate solely with Mannerheim, Kivimaki also informed Witting by telegram on 17 August.<sup>67</sup> The long loneliness was over. And for the Reich, the initial advance in military strategy in the far north had been taken.

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Footnotes---

1. John W. Wheeler-Bennett, The Nemesis of Power, The German Army in Politics 1918-1945 (New York: St. Martin's Press Inc., 1967), p.XIII.
2. Gregory Meiksins, The Baltic Riddle (New York: L.B. Fisher, 1943), p.186.
3. Seweryn Bialer, Stalin and his Generals, Soviet Military Memoirs of World War II (New York: Pegasus, 1969), p.130.
4. Oliver Warner, Marshal Mannerheim and the Finns (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967), p.169.
5. Anthony F. Upton, Finland 1939-1940 (London: Davis-Poynter Ltd., 1974), p. 154.
6. Anatole G. Mazour, Finland Between East and West (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company Inc., 1956), p.130.
7. Peter H. Krosby, Finland, Germany and the Soviet Union 1940-1941, The Petsamo Dispute (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), p.23.
8. Upton, Finland 1939-1940, pp.154-155.
9. Eric Dancy, "Finland Takes Stock," Foreign Affairs, vol. 24 (April 1946), p.519.
10. Krosby, op.cit., pp.11-12.
11. Dancy, op.cit., p.519.
12. For a detailed account of the first AA conference, on 28 March, concerning Germany's desires with regard to Finnish resources see Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945, Series D (Washington: Government Printing Office 1954-1962), vol.IX, pp.32-35. (Hereafter cited AA DGFP.) For a scholarly investigation of the entire course of the Petsamo negotiations consult Krosby, Finland, Germany and the Soviet Union 1940-1941.
13. Krosby, op.cit., p.16.
14. Ibid, p.17.
15. Ibid, p.17.



16. Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (Frankfurt am Main: Bernard und Graefe Verlag, 1965), vol.I, pp.1164-1165. (Hereafter cited OKW KTB.)
17. Krosby, op.cit., p.18. Despite the optimistic WV appraisal, the ocean route to Liinahamari passed within range of Red Army artillery and Luftwaffe air bases; Finland's "open" route to the West existed only by sufferance of the two great continental powers. It is ironic that, as late as 1937, one political analyst wrote, "Indeed, Finland is the only one among the border states, and one of the few states in Europe, in the enviable position of not being a playball of international politics, of being a master of its own fate, of being permitted to decide for itself whether it wants war or peace, and of probably having that decision respected by all the belligerents." Benjamin Akzin, "Choices Before the Baltic States," Foreign Affairs, vol.15 (April 1937), p.505.
18. AA DGFP, vol.IX, pp.34-35.
19. Ibid, vol.IX, p.403.
20. Ibid, vol.IX, pp.402-403.
21. Krosby, op.cit., pp.22-23.
22. Ibid, pp.23-24.
23. Ibid, pp.24-25.
24. C. Leonard Lundin, Finland in the Second World War (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957), p.87.
25. Krosby, op.cit., p.25. At the end of the Winter War Rolf Witting succeeded Vaino Tanner, whom Moscow declared "persona ingrata," as Foreign Minister. At the time of his appointment Witting was a bank director, past director of the Hydrological Institute in Helsinki, and had once been offered a post as full professor by the University in Berlin. Witting was multi-lingual, urbane, "friendly to Germany" and without significant contacts with the Western Powers. Wipert von Blucher, Gesandter Zwischen Diktatur und Demokratie (Wiesbaden: Limes Verlag, 1951), p.191.
26. Krosby, op.cit., p.17.
27. Ibid, p.17.
28. Barry A. Leach, German Strategy Against Russia 1939-1941 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp.54-57.
29. Barton Whaley, Codeword BARBAROSSA (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1973), p.14.
30. Franz Halder, Kriegstagebuch (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1962-1964), vol.I, p.374. (Hereafter cited Halder KTB.)
31. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.6; and Leach, op.cit., p.99.
32. Halder KTB, vol.II, pp.32-33.
33. Leach, op.cit., p.58.
34. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.33.

35. Ibid, vol.II, p.33.
36. Leach, op.cit., p.58.
37. Walter Laqueur, Russia and Germany, A Century of Conflict (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965), p.259.
38. Leach, op.cit., pp.100-101.
39. Walter Warlimont, Im Hauptquartier der deutschen Wehrmacht 1939-1945 (Bonn: Athenaum, 1964), p.112.
40. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.50.
41. Leach, op.cit., p.100.
42. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.50.
43. Earl F. Ziemke, The German Northern Theater of Operations 1940-1945 (Washington: Department of the Army, 1959), p.121.
44. Leach, op.cit., pp.69-70.
45. AA DGFP, vol.X, pp.405-406.
46. Ibid, vol.X, pp.121-122.
47. Thomas W. Kistle, "Finland in Nazi Germany's War Strategy" (Thesis M.A., University of Montana, 1968), p.84.
48. Krosby, op.cit., p.64.
49. AA DGFP, vol.X, p.478. On 24 July, a rumor to the effect that a Soviet ultimatum to Finland was imminent swept the diplomatic community. The Soviet Union, it was believed, would demand the full demobilization of the Finnish armed forces. The rumor was reported to the AA as being without apparent foundation, but could not be entirely dismissed. The German missions in the Soviet Union, Finland, Sweden, and the Baltic States were instructed to be alert for further developments. Count Friedrich von Schulenburg, Ambassador in Moscow, while discounting the rumor, described Soviet intentions as "wholly obscure." Krosby, op.cit., p.59.
50. Anthony F. Upton, Finland in Crisis, 1940-1941: A Study in Small-Power Politics (London: Faber and Faber LTD., 1964), p.121.
51. Ziemke, op.cit., pp.121-122. For an indepth study of the Marks Plan, refer to George E. Blau, The German Campaign in Russia - Planning and Operations 1940-1942 (Washington: Department of the Army, 1955), pp.6-12.
52. Whaley, op.cit., p.15. During the early OKH planning, economic and logistic factors were almost totally ignored by the Gen.St.d.H. In the OKW, however, economic and logistic preparations began as soon as Hitler announced his consideration of a campaign into Russia to Jodl and Keitel in late July. On 29 July Jodl ordered the AL to initiate work on communication, accommodation, and depot facilities required in the probable eastern concentration and deployment areas. In August the OKW began drafting the economic plans for fielding one hundred eighty divisions even while arming possible allies. On 14 August Goring told Thomas, during the discussion of the Veltjens mission presumably, that "only now

was real rearmament production starting." Despite the OKW forethought, logistic and communication problems, as well as equipment shortages, were to plague German-Finnish cooperative planning and operations. Leach, op.cit., p.133.

53. Warlimont, op.cit., p.111.

54. Wilhelm Hess, Eismeerfront 1941 (Heidelberg: Kurt Vowinckel Verlag, 1956), p.12.

55. OKW KTB, vol.I, pp.32-33.

56. The justification for the relocation of the Gebirgskorps was that northern Scandinavia was a "near essential area" for the raw materials needed by wartime Germany, notably the iron ore of Sweden and the nickle ore of Finland. The forces in north Norway currently were deemed insufficient to guarantee security for the "near essential area," whether the threat be British or Soviet. Gerda-Luise Dietl and D. Kurt Herrman, General Dietl (Munche: Munchner Buchverlag, 1951), p.210.

57. The 2nd Geb.Div., responsible for the security of Finnmarken, comprised Geb. Jager Regiment 136 covering the Kirkenes-Tana region and Geb. Jager Regiment 137 held the line Hammerfest-Alta-Kautokeino-Karasjok. The 3rd Geb.Div. occupied the positions in Troms vacated by the 2nd Geb.Div. with Geb. Jager Regiment 138 in the Nordreisa-Tromso-Baulsfjord area and Geb. Jager Regiment 139 in the Saetermoen-Narvik region. Hess, op.cit., pp.12-13.

58. OKW KTB, vol.I, p.33.

59. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.62 and p.63. Throughout early August reports of Soviet troop concentrations seemingly threatening Finland flowed into Berlin. Ambassador Zechlin in Kuunas on 7 August reported that some fifteen divisions of the Red Army would assemble on the Finnish borders by mid-August and that Finland could expect a Soviet ultimatum which would result in the "complete occupation of Finland." On 12 August the Prince of Wied, Ambassador in Stockholm, was visited by Colonel Adlerkreutze of the Swedish General Staff Intelligence Department who expressed his "most serious concern" over the "imminent Russian attack on Finland." On 15 August von Blucher believed that some twenty-three Soviet divisions faced Finland. Krosby, op.cit., pp.59-63. See also Helmuth Greiner, Die Oberst Wehrmachtfuhrung 1939-1943 (Wiesbaden: Limes Verlag, 1951), pp.276-297.

60. AA DGFP, vol.X, p.467.

61. Heikki Jalanti, La Finlande dans L'etau Germano-Sovietique (Neuchatel: Editions de la Baconniere, 1966), p.167.

62. According to Jalanti, Veltjens was briefed orally by Goring and supplied, also by Goring, with written authorization to negotiate with Mannerheim, Jalanti, op.cit., pp.137-138.

63. AA DGFP, vol.X, p.467.

64. Many historians over the years have, at the very least, implied that the OKW arms offer and the OKL transit request were linked. This has led to a tolerant view of the German transit. It was axiomatic that Finland would welcome the arms offer. Not so the transit request. The fact that the Finnish government readily allowed the transit of OKL troops and equipment assuredly elevated their status in the view of Hitler and the OKW/OKH planning staffs. If Finland had accepted the munitions and refused the transit, how different the development of German



military strategy would have been in the far north; indeed, how different might Finland's position have been on B-Tag.

65. Jalanti, op.cit., p.139.

66. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.136.

67. Jalanti, op.cit., p.140.

First Phase: August 1940 - October 1940

"Now I am beginning to see a tiny ray of light in the intense darkness." - attributed to Rudolf Walden.<sup>1</sup>

When Veltjens arrived in Helsinki on 17 August, he was met and taken to Hilbert's summer villa, there to engage in a series of conversations with Hilbert and Tera.<sup>2</sup> Veltjens outlined his instructions; he was, he stated, to place a double proposition before Mannerheim. First, the government of the Reich was now willing to release the confiscated arms - one hundred seventy-eight antiquated naval guns originally destined for Finland to supplement its efforts in the Winter War and seized by OKW forces in the course of Weserubung - or replace them with others of similar calibre of German manufacture. These were to constitute a reserve in the event of a general Russo-Finnish conflict. In addition, certain other war surplus material could be transferred. The entire transaction was to be rigorously secret, with no detail committed to writing. The transportation of the material was to be Finland's responsibility. Secondly, Veltjens was to discover if, in principle, the Finns would consent to the transit by OKL personnel from Finnish ports to northern Norway. While transport routes existed by sea and Sweden to Finnmark, all were problematic.<sup>3</sup> Veltjens then asked Hilbert and Tera for advice on how best to approach the Field Marshal. He was warned that Mannerheim would probably decline to give a decision on the transit request since this was patently political in nature and beyond his authority. He was also advised not to make the arms offer conditional upon the granting of transit rights;<sup>4</sup> a rather useless precaution since the OKL request and OKW offer had from conception been separate initiatives and were both handled by Veltjens merely for convenience.

At some point during the course of the day, Veltjens made his way to the DGH and met with von Blucher. Von Blucher had previously received the disquieting

information that an attempt to initiate relations between the Finnish authorities and a German department not under the scrutiny of the AA was being made.<sup>5</sup> The Ambassador was informed by Veltjens that the Fuhrer had "made a decisive turn" in policy and would satisfy the desires of the Finnish Army for arms "in every respect."<sup>6</sup> This revelation took von Blucher totally unprepared and he refused to give it full belief without confirmation. Feeling the matter too delicate for telegraphic treatment, he dispatched Colonel Rossing to Berlin to obtain verbal verification from von Grundherr. While still in Germany, Rossing telephoned the DGH substantiating the claims made by Veltjens.<sup>7</sup> From this point in time, the AA and the DGH were to be involved in, and informed of, the developing German-Finnish relationship to a lesser and progressively lesser degree.<sup>8</sup>

On 17 August, Mannerheim received a telegram from Kivimaki requesting that he be present at the Malm airfield personally on the morning of the following day to accept an important communication.<sup>9</sup> Mannerheim, accompanied by Major General Rudolf Walden, Finnish Minister of Defense, and Lieutenant General Erik Heinrichs, Finnish Chief of Staff, and joined by Witting at the field met Baron Wrede on 18 August. Mannerheim read the note, acquainted Walden and Witting with its contents, and agreed to converse informally with Veltjens during the evening.<sup>10</sup> Heinrichs, the only military professional besides his commander present, was not informed of the body of the note.

Veltjens presented the dual propositions to Mannerheim in private in Helsinki. The Field Marshal responded to the arms offer with satisfaction; Finland's armed forces were in truly desperate straits with respect to material.<sup>11</sup> The Reich envoy stipulated that the arms transaction would be completed quietly and through commercial channels, notably by reactivating and expanding the arms contract, conducted through a Danish intermediary, interrupted by the Winter War.<sup>12</sup> The Field Marshal foresaw no difficulty. Veltjens then presented a personal note from Goring to Mannerheim, a note inquiring if Finland would grant permission for the transit of Luftwaffe personnel and equipment via the western Finnish rail and

road network to Norway, such as Sweden had granted on 5 July.<sup>13</sup> Mannerheim hesitated. He pointed out that questions of such nature were matters of state and for the civil authorities to decide. While, as head of the military he could procure arms and supplies wherever feasible, he could not arbitrarily agree, even tentatively, to allow German troops transit of Finnish territory.<sup>14</sup> Mannerheim then suggested that Veltjens contact Witting, and offered to arrange such a meeting.<sup>15</sup> Veltjens replied that, as special envoy for Hitler, he was authorised to speak only to Mannerheim. Further, a definite answer was required in Berlin by 20 August on this matter. After some thought, Mannerheim proposed that, as head of Finland's forces, he would contact Risto Ryti, Prime Minister. The Prime Minister would make the decision and Mannerheim would inform Veltjens.<sup>16</sup> Veltjens agreed; while taking his leave of Mannerheim, he urged that Mannerheim supply an answer, at least "in principle," to the request upon the next day.<sup>17</sup> Mannerheim telephoned Ryti that night and received permission to accept the proposed transit. Following the Ryti conversation, he called Walden and reported all that had transpired.<sup>18</sup> Then the Field Marshal retired for the night, presumably well pleased with the course of events.

On the morning of 19 August Veltjens had his answer. He telegraphed Goring of the success of his mission; the AA was alerted.<sup>19</sup> Veltjens delayed his departure in order to confer with Ryti, Witting and Walden.<sup>20</sup> During the meetings with Ryti and Witting, the course of Finnish-Soviet relations and the Petsamo nickle negotiations were discussed.<sup>21</sup> The meeting with Walden, on 20 August, was more specific. It was agreed that the firms of J. Veltjens Waffen und Munition and Dahberg and Hilbert would serve as intermediaries for the actual transfer of arms.<sup>22</sup> Veltjens assured Walden that expenses incurred during the OKL transit could be covered by Germany through arms deliveries. The Finnish government offered to put tonnage at Germany's disposal for the Baltic leg of the transit. Veltjens told the Minister that large numbers of land mines could be obtained by Finland on credit. Finally, Veltjens passed on Goring's "personal opinion" that



Finland should prepare to defend itself; "Russia's goal in a new war could only be to annihilate Finland."<sup>23</sup>

In Berlin, Schnurre, Kivimaki and Rainer von Fieandt, head of the Finnish delegation involved in the nick<sup>e</sup> negotiations, were summoned by von Ribbentrop.<sup>24</sup> The RAM confirmed the rumors that the Fuhrer had decided to release to Finland the cargo of artillery which had been confiscated in April. The shipment originally consisted of a mixture of outdated French artillery pieces.<sup>25</sup> Von Ribbentrop hastened to add that the Reich was willing to substitute appropriate weapons from OKW stocks if the Finnish government should so desire. He then commissioned Schnurre to liaison<sup>e</sup> with the OKW on this matter.<sup>26</sup>

Remaining in Berlin, on 22 August Colonel Rossing conferred with Halder.<sup>27</sup> Rossing reviewed the state of the Finnish military, reporting that some sixteen divisions had been raised, the losses of the Winter War having been replaced and, indeed, that the Army had expanded.<sup>28</sup> Rossing, at some point, would have noted the material shortages that the Finnish Army suffered from. Halder then informed the Military Attache that the Fuhrer had authorised the delivery of arms and munitions to Finland. He also informed Rossing, who was undoubtedly aware of the fact anyway, that the Fuhrer had ordered the movement of sections of the Gebirgskorps to Kirkenes.<sup>29</sup> Rossing departed, to inform von Blucher in detail upon his return to the DGH.

Immediately upon Veltjens' departure from Helsinki, Mannerheim appointed three officers - Major General Paavo Talvela, Colonel M.K. Stewen, and Commodore Svante A. Sundman of the Finnish Navy - to study the transit proposal and develop details for the formal arrangement. They were to be directly answerable only to the Field Marshal.<sup>30</sup> On 29 August, Talvela, responsible for all traffic on the Arctic Highway north of Rovaniemi, and Stewen, Chief of Operations of the Finnish General Staff, departed Helsinki with naval and military maps to travel to Berlin.<sup>31</sup> There they entered into discussions with representatives of the OKL and OKW.

Meanwhile, on 22 August, Colonel Raatikainen was ordered to Berlin with a list of arms that Finland desired.<sup>32</sup> Throughout the latter half of August, conferences on the arms transaction were taking place. On 24 August, Thomas, following a meeting with Goring, wrote "The Reich Marshal said to me that he had directed the Air Ministry to make deliveries as liberally as possible. Speedy assistance to Finland is essential, especially because Finland is ready to make concessions in every respect. The business should be completed quickly in close cooperation with Veltjens."<sup>33</sup> On 26 August von Brauchitsch met with Hitler and reviewed the progress of the transit and arms negotiations.<sup>34</sup> On 30 August, following yet another conference with Goring on 29 August, Thomas was permitted to brief the staff officers of WiRu on the new Reich policy with regard to Finland.<sup>35</sup> Study commenced in the offices of the WiRu on the best methods to speedily supply Finland's military necessities.

A curious dichotomy appears at this point. Thomas of OKW wrote on 30 August, "Any further political or military advance of the Russians in the European area would be displeasing to the Fuhrer. He has given a directive that support of Finland be carried out immediately on a very extensive scale. The fact that Germany is giving assistance to Finland is to be made known to the Russians, since the Fuhrer believes that then the Russians will shrink from further steps."<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, Halder of OKH noted on 31 August, "The Russians should understand ... That the transports at present going to Finland are only shipments of arms which were withheld during the war and which can now be made (instead of guns of large caliber which can be used by Germany, these are of medium caliber) ... Reinforcement of Kirkenes. For this purpose transit through Finland. This is directed against England."<sup>37</sup> While the OKW foresaw the transit and arms agreements as a counter and a warning to the Soviet Union; the OKH engaged in a feeble attempt at camouflage for the shift in German policy. This was but the first such difference in method and in interpretation that was to confuse and complicate all approaches to a unified policy, both diplomatic and military, in



relations with Finland and with Soviet Russia. The increasing rivalry between the OKW and the OKH, coupled with the ignorance of the AA, was to bedevil German strategy in Finland.<sup>38</sup>

On 19 August WiRu OKW submitted a two page memorandum entitled "Bedeutung Finnlands fur die deutsche Wehrwirtschaft" to Keitel; in effect it was a comprehensive study of Finland's economic significance. Six categories of commodities of use to the German war economy were enumerated; the first dealt with the <sup>el</sup>nickle available from the Kolosjoki mines. The study left no room for doubt: "As a source country for German supplies, Finland is indispensable with regard to <sup>el</sup>nickle."<sup>39</sup> On 20 August this memorandum was forwarded to Colonel Buschenhagen under a letter from Warlimont, who wrote that the study "confirms the decisive importance of the Petsamo area and suggests ... that all measures should be taken in order to appear there first ... and to secure the deposits for Germany under all circumstances."<sup>40</sup> By 22 August Buschenhagen and Falkenhorst had read and initialed the memorandum. Buschenhagen's staff had begun operational studies immediately in response to the WiRu report. By 23 August three papers had been drafted for the perusal of OKW. The first was a geopolitical treatise on possible Soviet operations against northern Norway.<sup>41</sup> The next concerned a number of supply and transit problems for the defense of the Kirkenes region which were to be passed on to Dietl. The last, the most significant, was a brief draft for an armed German occupation of Petsamo, codenamed "Renntier."<sup>42</sup> Buschenhagen was charged with the responsibility of expanding in detail the Renntier plan. On 26 August the concept of seizing the Petsamo region was discussed with the OKH chiefs. Halder noted that this possible venture was yet another demand on Germany's overstretched resources, but the planning was to be continued.<sup>43</sup> Halder also noted that the occupation could be triggered by a Soviet attack on Finland.<sup>44</sup> Halder undoubtedly gained this information from von Brauchitsch, who had conferred with Hitler that day; however, this did not mean that Hitler had decided to openly support Finland in the event of a general Finnish-Soviet war. Yet the

Reich was now willing to risk a confrontation over the fate of Petsamo if necessary. Renntier was the first of several feasibility studies to be initiated concerning OKW/OKH operations on Finnish soil.<sup>45</sup>

On 3 September Lieutenant General Friedrich Paulus took up the appointment of Quartermaster General OKH. Personnel under his direction began immediate work on a strategic survey for operations in the east based on the Marcks Plan.<sup>46</sup> Jodl had meanwhile requested his subordinates in the AL to prepare a campaign plan for his consideration. This operational study was to be drafted without recourse to the plans that were being prepared by the OKH, since Jodl wanted to evaluate the OKH planning prior to its submission to Hitler.<sup>47</sup> The AL plan, submitted to Jodl on 19 September, stressed the need for concentrating the assault forces north of the shortest route to Moscow, via Smolensk. In the Finnish theater of operations the AL officers advised the concentration of all available German and Finnish forces in the south; no attack in the direction of Murmansk was contemplated. The thrust across the southeastern border was to be coordinated with the advance of Army Group North and was to be directed across the Karelian Isthmus towards Leningrad or east of Lake Ladoga towards Tikhvin.<sup>48</sup> The intention was to assist the advance of Army Group North by isolating and destroying Soviet forces that could threaten the northern flank. The plan possessed the advantage of tying the operations out of Finland directly in with the main German effort, obeying Clausewitz's maxim on concentration of forces. But, the AL plan was impaired by political and transportation difficulties which would prevent Wehrmacht concentration in southern Finland prior to the attack.<sup>49</sup>

Through early September Talvela and Stewen, together with Major Ochs for Germany, labored to draft the military version of the transit agreement.<sup>50</sup> On 3 September Talvela and Ochs arrived in Helsinki to survey the north region of the transit, notably the Arctic Highway through Petsamo. Finally, an agreement was signed in Helsinki by Stewen and Ochs and dated 12 September.<sup>51</sup> The initial "military" transit agreement was in the form of a working arrangement between the

Finnish General Staff and the OKL. It did not refer to any aspect of possible political or legal complications; it dealt entirely with the technical details of the transits. There were to be three transits, carrying OKL personnel and flak equipment to the Finnish-Norwegian border on the Arctic Highway route; the first would travel in Finnish shipping from German harbors on 18 September and debark for transit on 22 September. The other two would follow at specified intervals with the entire south to north shift to be concluded by 16 October.<sup>52</sup> The three mass transits were to consist of two thousand three hundred thirty-nine troops and two hundred and seven vehicles in the first movement, two thousand five hundred and one men and three hundred eighty vehicles in the second, and six hundred ninety-eight men and one hundred twenty-three vehicles in the final transit. Heinrichs noted that the agreement stipulated that the troops and their arms were to travel apart.<sup>53</sup> The troops were to be landed at Oulu, the war materials and vehicles at Vaasa.<sup>54</sup> The Germans were to be conveyed to Rovaniemi in sealed trains, would then move overland to Ivalo and, after a rest, eventually to Kirkenes. Provisions were made permitting the Reich to establish depots along the route, barracks at Rovaniemi and an extensive supply dump at Ivalo.<sup>55</sup> Some one thousand one hundred and two OKL personnel were to man the transit route, supply dumps and rest camps. These were to retire at the conclusion of the operation.<sup>56</sup> During the course of the negotiations, the German representative extended the possibility that the transit become permanent, as in the case of Sweden, for men on leave or ill.<sup>57</sup> The terms of the agreement were sufficiently vague to permit great latitude in the details of execution.<sup>58</sup>

On the same day that von Ribbentrop was being briefed by the OKH on aspects "of a technical nature" of the military contact with Finland,<sup>59</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Bernhard von Lossberg submitted to the OKW Operations Study "Ost, W.F.St./Op. H. 905" dated 15 September. The Lossberg study was an informal treatise on projected operations for the army groups assigned to the invasion of Russia. In it is mentioned Gr.XXI, which would be under the command of AOK Norwegen and operate



from Finnish soil. Lossberg's report states, "Group XXI will form a separate group in the north, together with the army of the Finns, who it is anticipated will be our allies. It will have the task of striking with part of its forces from north-eastern Norway towards Murmansk. The main body of its forces will move on Swedish and Finnish railways and under Finnish protection to southern Finland, where it will pin down Russian forces and perhaps attack north of Lake Ladoga, at the latest when the German north wing is approaching Leningrad."<sup>60</sup> This is the kernel of the planning that would later be used as a basis for initial negotiations with the Finnish High Command on joint operations. Gr.XXI was rapidly being elevated from the status of a paper army. The 196th Infantry Division was shifted to Norway in September and designated for use in Finland.<sup>61</sup> Between 17 August and 25 September some twelve thousand six hundred troops of the Gebirgskorps, supplemented by one thousand one hundred eighty-four horses, one thousand four hundred eighty-four vehicles, and fifteen panzers stood along the Finnish border.<sup>62</sup> And in early September Hitler authorized the establishment of a OKM command for the polar coast.<sup>63</sup>

The leaders of the Finnish government, perhaps prompted by Kivimaki, became concerned after 12 September that the military transit agreement was insufficient. On 20 September Kivimaki raised the matter with von Grundherr of the AA, who was stunned to hear that OKL troops would land in Finland on 22 September. Von Weizsacker, contacted by telephone, professed ignorance of this development. Kivimaki declared that his government was concerned with appearances and thus wished a political agreement to cover the transit. State Secretary von Weizsacker drafted such an agreement, but on 21 September informed Kivimaki that the matter really did not merit concern or attention. Kivimaki reported to Witting in Helsinki that the AA seemed unwilling to commit the matter to writing. Later Kivimaki was shown a draft by Grundherr and finally, on 22 September, von Weizsacker and Kivimaki formalized the transit by an exchange of diplomatic notes, a few hours after the landing of the first bloc of German troops.<sup>64</sup> The political

transit agreement read:

"1. The Finnish Government, upon request of the Government of the Reich, grants the through-transport of material with escort personnel from the northern ports of the Baltic Sea by way of Rovaniemi and the northern Arctic Ocean Road to Kirkenes in Northern Norway.

"2. The Government of the German Reich shall duly indicate to the Finnish Government the ports of debarkation selected, the number of the transport vessels, the dates of sailing and arrival, and the scheduled daily stages of the transports in Northern Finland.

"3. The Government of the Reich shall notify the Finnish Government at least one day in advance of the arrival of the transport vessels.

"4. Ordnance shall be shipped apart from the troops in separate freight cars. A special agreement will be made regarding the number of officers and men for the guard details on the freight cars carrying ordnance."<sup>65</sup>

It is obvious that the political transit agreement was less specific than the military transit agreement. The reason for the diplomatic note would appear to arise from the Finnish desire for a legalistic approach and, very probably, the Finnish desire to publicly proclaim an end to Finland's enforced isolation, the creation of an entente cordiale.<sup>66</sup>

The first sailing consisted of six transport ships with an accompanying tanker which put to sea in convoy from Swinemunde and Stettin on 20 September and 21 September.<sup>67</sup> This convoy arrived off the ports of Waskiluoto (Vaasa) and Oulu during the early hours of 22 September. Civilian officials were unaware of the transit arrangements; the chief of police in Vaasa telephoned the Ministry of the Interior and announced that German troop transports were standing off the port; he requested instructions. The Minister of the Interior knew nothing of the matter and in turn contacted Ryti. Ryti assured him that the landings had been prepared for; the assurances passed down the line; the troops landed.<sup>68</sup> Thus began the transit of Wehrmacht troops through Finland, a sight that was to grow famil-

iar within the next few months.<sup>69</sup>

Once the transit had begun, it became necessary, since obviously any attempt at concealment would have been futile and possibly contrary to Finnish aspirations, to inform foreign governments with diplomatic missions in Finland, notably the Stalin and the Churchill governments, which recently had been causing the Finnish leaders some concern.<sup>70</sup> As early as 12 September, during a conversation between an anonymous German officer and the Chief of Finnish Intelligence, one Colonel Melander, in Stockholm, the Finns requested that the Reich inform the Soviet Union of the transit.<sup>71</sup> On 16 September Ambassador von Schulenburg in Moscow was instructed to inform the Soviets, "verbally and casually," on the afternoon of 21 September that the Finnish government had granted transit to an OKL antiaircraft battalion bound for Kirkenes.<sup>72</sup> On 21 September 1940, Lieutenant Colonel Leopold Burkner notified AOK Norwegen that the AA would inform the Soviet Union of the transit.<sup>73</sup> Von Schulenburg, however, left Moscow for Berlin on the morning of 21 September, evidently without carrying out his instructions.<sup>74</sup> There followed a brief confusing flurry of communications on who should inform who, typical of the diplomacy of the time. Weizsacker wrote on 22 September that "the Finnish Government also suggested that we inform the Russian Government on the date of arrival of the ships in Finland, or directly prior to that date. However, we intend to refrain from doing so. The Finnish Minister here [Berlin] considers it proper for the Finnish Government on its part to inform the Russian Government as a precautionary measure, whereas the Finnish Foreign Minister does not want to inform the Russians on his own initiative for the time being, but only in case of a Russian inquiry. However, we are not exerting any influence on this decision to be taken by the Finnish Government."<sup>75</sup> Von Blucher, the next day, informed the AA that Witting had informed the British and Soviet ambassadors in Helsinki of the political transit agreement. While the English representative received the news calmly and left to draft a formal protest, the Soviet minister was serious and probing.<sup>76</sup> The Soviet envoy even inquired if Germany had issued



an ultimatum to gain the transit rights.<sup>77</sup> On 26 September, Vyacheslav M. Molotov met with Werner von Tippleskirch, since von Schulenburg was still absent, and requested the text of the Finnish-German agreement, including all secret provisions. Citing an official German communique by Paul Karl Schmidt of the press section of the AA, Molotov became insistent. Von Tippleskirch professed total ignorance of the matter and promised to communicate with Berlin.<sup>78</sup>

During the 12 September conversation between Melander and the German official, the Finnish officer made several noteworthy requests on behalf of his nation. First, the Reich was to grant Sweden a free hand to aid Finland if a Soviet invasion was launched. Second, OKW artillery and armor specialists were to be sent to Finland for consultation. Finally, Melander listed arms that Finland desired, 15-cm artillery and 3.7 PAK and 20-mm flak.<sup>79</sup>

As noted earlier, Raatikainen had arrived on a secret mission to officially negotiate for arms. The arms that had been confiscated in the Norwegian ports were deemed unsuitable and the OKW agreed that they would be replaced by captured British and French material and arms of German manufacture. Further, it was agreed that the munitions destined for Finland would comprise three hundred pieces of mixed artillery, five hundred pieces of antiaircraft artillery, five thousand revolvers, fifty-three aircraft, some six hundred fifty thousand shells of various calibre, four hundred thousand antiaircraft shells, and one hundred fifty thousand antitank mines. A scheme was devised whereby the arms would journey to Finland with the transit troops but be loaded into separate railroad cars and be detached along the route.<sup>80</sup> On 30 September Veltjens arrived in Helsinki to finalize negotiations. On 1 October the Finnish <sup>government</sup> ~~council~~ allotted the Ministry of Defense fifteen hundred million Finnmarks to purchase arms. By agreement the Reich owed Finland seven million six hundred ninety-six Reichsmarks and eighty-six Pfennings compensation for transit and the confiscated Madsen shipment.<sup>81</sup> Finland's credit, for the arms contract, was excellent. On 1 October the contract was signed by Walden and Veltjens.<sup>82</sup> Although the actual arms passed between the

firms of O.Y. Dahberg and Hilbert A.B. of Helsinki and J. Veltjens Waffen und Munition of Berlin, the arms in effect went from the stocks of the OKW to those of the Finnish Army. The contract was envisioned to last till October 1945.<sup>83</sup>

The August-October period can be considered, arbitrarily, the first phase of the development of German military strategy in Finland. From the moment consideration and study of a possible attack on the Soviet Union began, overall German policy towards Finland altered; and at no other period was the reversal of policy so obviously dramatic as during this first phase. The strengthening of the Finnish Army with arms and munitions had begun. The establishment of a large force in Finnmark was being carried out by way of conventional transit through Norway and via the special Finnish rail-highway link. This was already designated by the OKW to be a sufficiently powerful force to be used for independent offensive action. Indeed, plans for its use were already being formulated; witness Renn-tier. AA support for the Finnish position on diplomatic issues, though hesitant, was becoming manifest. The trips of Talvela, Stewen and Raatikainen to Berlin and of Ochs to Finland planted the germ of future staff cooperation between the German High Command and the Finnish High Command. And, of great consequence, tentative suggestions for use of German and Finnish forces operating, from Finnish territory, against the Red Army had been made by OKW and OKH staff planners. The Finnish military, unaware of all the facets, did not - could not - perceive the pattern of development; the Wehrmacht strategists could, with only slightly more vision, recognize portents of the future. German military presence in Finland's existence was to be increasingly concrete and increasingly purposeful. That it existed at all was due to these initial events, all interlocking.

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Footnotes---

1. Krosby, op.cit., p.65.

2. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.136.
3. Jalanti, op.cit., pp.139-140.
4. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.136.
5. Blucher, op.cit., p.198.
6. Lundin, op.cit., p.89. It appears that no mention of the OKL transit request was made at this point.
7. Blucher, op.cit., p.198.
8. The AA was unaware of OKW/OKH planning; von Ribbentrop was not informed of the contemplated offensive, which was in direct violation of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, until the spring of 1941. The DGH operated in a void of diplomatic protocol, without knowledge of the military reality that dictated events.
9. Carl Gustav Mannerheim, The Memoirs of Marshal Mannerheim (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1953), p.399; Warner, op.cit., p.175; Mazour, op.cit., p.136.
10. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, pp.136-137.
11. Jalanti, op.cit., p.142.
12. Krosby, op.cit., p.65.
13. John H. Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, 1939-1944 (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1948), p.92; Warner, op.cit., p.175.
14. Lundin, op.cit., pp.88-89.
15. Warner, op.cit., p.176.
16. Jalanti, op.cit., p.142.
17. Warner, op.cit., p.176.
18. Jalanti, op.cit., p.142; Lundin, op.cit., p.89.
19. Jalanti, op.cit., p.144.
20. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.138.
21. Ibid, p.138.
22. Jalanti, op.cit., p.144.
23. Krosby, op.cit., p.66.
24. Blucher, op.cit., p.198. Immediately after the Winter War the Reich had displayed an interest in the nickel ore in the region of Petsamo. The concession was held by the Mond Nickel Company of London. However, in June Rainer von Fieandt, as head of the Finnish trade delegation, entered into negotiations in Berlin to supply nickel ore and matte to the Reich. On 23 June the Kremlin requested that Finland grant the concession to the Soviet Union, or establish a joint Finnish-Soviet company to dispose of the nickel. As the Soviet Union was at the time exporting nickel ore, the move was seen in Berlin as an attempt to



cripple the growing Nazi war industry. Thus began a period of complex and often dilatory diplomatic maneuvering on the fate of the Kolosjoki nickel that was to continue until a military solution was brought about on B-Tag.

25. Krosby, op.cit., p.65.

26. AA DGFP, vol.X, pp.511-512. No record exists documenting that Schnurre ever conversed with any representative of WiRu on this topic.

27. Gerhard L. Weinberg, Germany and the Soviet Union, 1939-1941 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), p.127.

28. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.72.

29. Ibid, vol.II, p.72.

30. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.139.

31. Jalanti, op.cit., p.147.

32. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.139.

33. AA DGFP, vol.X, p.512. The OKL was involved in the requests for anti-aircraft and combat aircraft desired by Finland. It is not specified but, considering Goring as the source for the view, the concessions referred to are probably in relation to the OKL transit.

34. Weinberg, op.cit., p.127; AA DGFP, vol.X, p.512.

35. Weinberg, op.cit., p.127.

36. AA DGFP, vol.X, p.512.

37. Ibid, vol.X, p.512. While not totally false, Halder's statements are not totally factual either. Halder, while mentioning the guns being shipped, without mentioning that the Madsen arms were being replaced with modern manufacture, does not make note of the other war surplus - the antitank mines and aircraft - requested; material which could have only one conceivable function, to counter Soviet pressure. Further, while it is true that the OKL reinforcements to be transported to Kirkenes via Finnish rails and roads were to aid in the defense of Norway against English raids, they were already by 31 August also earmarked to oppose Soviet forces in the far north. Halder's statement falls into the grey nether region of half-truths.

38. The rivalry between the OKH and the OKW had its birth in 1938, when Hitler created the OKW as a unified high command directly responsible to the Fuhrer, a move bitterly protested by the OKH and OKM. Throughout the prewar period the OKW expanded, often duplicating or usurping many of the tasks performed by the OKH, thus creating a sense of competition and conflict in the realm of planning and operational studies. The planning and land command for Weserubung was placed totally under the supervision and direction of the OKW by order of Hitler, a decision greatly resented by von Brauchitsch. For more on this topic, refer to Wheeler-Bennett, The Nemesis of Power, The German Army in Politics; John Strawson, Hitler as Military Commander (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1971); Telford Taylor, Sword and Swastika, Generals and Nazis in the Third Reich (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969).

39. For the complete draft of the report, which also listed items such as cop-

per, non-ferrous metals, lumber and cellulose, hides and furs, and certain food products (butter, eggs, and cheese) to be of interest, see T-312/1010/5205486-88. "Bedeutung Finnlands fur die deutsche Wehrwirtschaft." All citations of unpublished documentation currently on microfilm will give series number, roll number, and relevant frame number(s) followed by the title of the document. Selected materials were consulted from the following three collections: "Records of Headquarters, German Armed Forces High Command" (2 liner feet, 1524 microfilm rolls), "Records of Headquarters, German Army High Command" (18 liner feet, 2356 microfilm rolls), and "Records of the German Army Field Commands" (49 liner feet, 6883 microfilm rolls). For further information on the unpublished documents consult Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria Virginia (Washington: General Services Administration, 1958 - date).

40. For the text of the Warlimont letter, see T-312/1010/9205476-68. Personal correspondence addressed "Chef des Stabes der XXI Armeekorps Herrn. Oberst d.G. Buschenhagen."

41. See T-312/1010/9205480. "Mil.Geo. - Stellungnahme zu der Frage Wie und wo konnte Russland das nordliche Norwegen abscheiden."

42. See T-312/1010/9205482. "Aktennotiz Betr. Renntier"

43. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.139.

44. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.78.

45. There is some scholarly conflict over whether the motivation behind the conception of "Renntier" is of a political-military nature or an exclusively economic logic. Initially the motivation was purely economic, despite the views of some of the Nazi hierarchy that the importance of the nickel for the war effort was greatly exaggerated; see, for example, Albert Speer, Inside the Third Reich (New York: Macmillan Company, 1970), p.481. However, as planning for "Barbarossa" progressed, "Renntier" took on a distinct military value for AOK Norwegen while retaining its economic aspect. As a prelude for larger operations, the success of the Petsamo occupation became crucial. For more study on this question, consult Krosby, Finland, Germany and the Soviet Union 1940-1941; and Ziemke, The German Northern Theater of Operations.

46. Leach, op.cit., p.103.

47. Blau, op.cit., p.13.

48. Ibid, p.13.

49. Ziemke, op.cit., p.122.

50. Jalanti, op.cit., p.147.

51. Wuorinen, op.cit., p.92.

52. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.140.

53. Jalanti, op.cit., p.148.

54. Ibid, p.148.

55. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.140.

56. In point of fact, they were not withdrawn. On 16 October, two thousand one

hundred ninty-eight troops remained in Finland. Jalanti, op.cit., p.154.

57. Jalanti, op.cit., p.147.

58. Wuorinen, op.cit., p.93.

59. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.139.

60. Leach, op.cit., p.259.

61. Greiner, op.cit., p.297.

62. Dietl and Herrman, op.cit., p.213.

63. Greiner, op.cit., p.297.

64. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, pp.145-146.

65. Raymond Sontag and James Beddie, Nazi-Soviet Relations 1939-1941, Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office (Washington: Department of State, 1948), p.202. Von Weizsacker, in a telegram to the DGH, wrote, "Points 2-4 go back to Finnish requests. It should be noted with regard to point 4 that this formulation has been chosen in consideration of the Russian-Finnish agreements on Hanko, but that in practice, in the opinion of the OKW, the Finns will leave us a free hand." AA DGFP, vol.IX, p.149.

66. Mazour, op.cit., p.137.

67. AA DGFP, vol.IX, p.149.

68. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.148.

69. The estimates of the German troops transited vary wildly. By German figures, approximately two thousand four hundred men passed through Finland between 22 September and 2 October with an additional two thousand three hundred between 7 October and 16 October. The same source quotes fourteen thousand five hundred troops between 22 September 1940 and 30 April 1941. Finnish sources put this total at nineteen thousand five hundred fifty-seven enlisted ranks and one thousand one hundred fifty-eight officers. During the month of May 1941 the total number of transits, by German calculations, was two thousand five hundred and one and in June, escalating for B-Tag, twenty-two thousand and seventy-nine OKW personnel passed into the country. To support this transit, in mid-October 1940 two thousand one hundred ninty-eight transport and supply personnel were present; on 15 March 1941, eight hundred seventy troops manned the route; and on 6 June 1941, one thousand five hundred thirty-four support troops were in Finland. See Jalanti, op.cit., p.214.

70. Witting informed von Blucher on 19 July, without enumerating specific instances, that the British government was "suddenly causing trouble for Finnish shipping via Petsamo." This was England's response to the increasing pro-German emphasis in Finland. By the end of July, Witting was complaining to von Blucher that the English were "causing new difficulties for Finland daily." On 31 July the British Reprisals Order was decreed, in effect a blockade of continental Europe. The AA warned Finland that it would henceforth regard any compliance with British blockade regulations as "active support of British measures." The Reich's countermeasures would depend on what the Ryti government decided to do. After negotiations in August, on 7 September an agreement allowed Finnish trade to conform to the British regulations, with OKM supervision. Consult Krosby, op.cit., pp.48-50. Meanwhile, in August 1940, the Soviet Union began to make new



demands on Finland, notably in regard to the Aaland Islands. On 7 September von Ribbentrop informed the DGH that German interest in the military status of the Aaland chain was considerable and that Germany, "as the most important Baltic Sea country," would be included in any negotiations. For more extensive information on the Aaland controversy, see AA DGFP, vol.XI, p.41 and p.230.

71. See T-312/1033/9231349-50. "Bericht uber Reise nach Stockholm v.12-14.9.40. Besprechung mit Chef des finnischen Nachrichtendienstes."

72. AA DGFP, vol.XI, pp.92-93.

73. See T-312/1033/9231351. "Bericht uber Reise nach Stockholm v.12-14.9.40. Besprechung mit Chef des schwedischen Nachrichtendienstes."

74. Lundin, op.cit., p.90. An OKW note of 21 September reads in part, "According to a communication from the Foreign Ministry the Fuhrer has decided against informing the Soviet government about the German troops passing through Finland." It is possible that von Schulenburg was recalled for consultation on the matter. AA DGFP, vol.XI, p.92.

75. AA DGFP, vol.XI, p.149.

76. Ibid, vol.XI, p.160.

77. Blucher, op.cit., p.201.

78. Sontag and Beddie, op.cit., pp.197-199.

79. See T-312/1033/9231349-50. "Bericht uber Reise nach Stockholm v.12-14.9.40. Besprechung mit Chef des finnischen Nachrichtendienstes." The Melander incident remains somewhat mysterious. The account of the Stockholm meetings is unsigned; Melander revealed neither his sources of information nor his authorization for passing along the requests.

80. Jalanti, op.cit., pp.168-169. The scheme for delivery was later replaced by a less dramatic, but more effective route.

81. Jalanti, op.cit., pp.169-170.

82. AA DGFP, vol.XI, pp.232-233.

83. Thanks to Mannerheim's will and the Reichs armaments, the Finnish Army experienced a magnificent rebirth. The Finnish defense forces were reorganized into a peace-time establishment of thirteen brigades with a light and a heavy cavalry brigade able to be mobilized to a sixteen division force for war. By energetic recruitment and training of the male population, it was possible to raise the mobilized army from two hundred ninety thousand to an estimated four hundred twenty thousand. The number of field artillery battalions, thanks to German arms, grew from thirty-four to seventy-seven. Kristina Nyman, Finland's War Years 1939-1945, A List of Books and Articles concerning the Winter War and the Continuation War, Excluding Literature in Finnish and Russian (Mikkeli: Publications of the Society of Military History, 1973), p.XX.

Second Phase: October 1940 - December 1940

"The race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong, but that's the way to bet." - Anonymous.<sup>1</sup>

"What can Finland hope for? America is far away - too far. And Bolshevism is close at hand - too close." - attributed to Heinrich Himmler.<sup>2</sup>

On 2 October, von Ribbentrop authorized von Toppelleskirch to affirm that OKL troops were traveling to Kirkenes via a Finnish land route. Von Toppelleskirch was to stress its non-political nature and declare that, as the matter was purely technical, the German Reich had seen no compelling reason to expressly inform the Soviet Union of the matter.<sup>3</sup> The agreement was to be likened to the Swedish-German transit agreement;<sup>4</sup> "just as we [Germany] reached an understanding with Sweden about similar transport through Swedish territory to the areas of Oslo, Trondheim, and Narvik, an understanding was reached with Finland about transit to the area of Kirkenes."<sup>5</sup> Von Toppelleskirch was authorized to deliver to Molotov the text of the 22 September four-point political agreement.<sup>6</sup> Von Toppelleskirch carried out his instructions during a conversation with the Soviet Foreign Minister at the Kremlin on 4 October. Molotov repeatedly pointed out that Finland fell, by agreement, within the Soviet sphere of influence.<sup>7</sup> He then requested that more detailed information regarding the transits be supplied by the Reich, specifically mentioning as points of interest numbers involved, their exact destinations, and the duration of the transit.<sup>8</sup> Von Toppelleskirch desired to know whether the Soviet government had not also been informed by the Finnish government of the transit; Molotov replied in the negative. The Minister Attache could do no more than communicate Molotov's request for yet more information to the Wilhelmstrasse, which he promised to do.<sup>9</sup>

On 7 October the Finnish government received a note from Ivan S. Zotov, the

Soviet Minister in Helsinki, demanding free access for Soviet observers to the German transit route and Finnish military installations along the route.<sup>10</sup> This action emphasised forcibly the danger for Finland inherent in the transit agreement. Finnish leaders had concluded it for the sole purpose of aligning German interests more closely with the interests of Finland, so closely that the Reich might be inclined to defend those interests against Soviet pressure. Should this hope prove to be illusory, then the Finns would have succeeded only in provoking the Soviet government and, in granting the transit request, might well have ventured beyond the bounds of safety. They had, irrevocably, decided to gamble on German support, as implied by the arms contract. The Finns hoped to turn this implication into a steadfast guarantee. In a letter to Veltjens, Witting expressed the hope that the Reich "in case of possible difficulties which might arise for the Finnish state from the Soviet Union as a result of fulfilling the terms of the contract, would lend its support in eliminating such difficulties."<sup>11</sup> Finland, floundering in the morass, had yet to find a rock to cling to.<sup>12</sup>

Rossing and his staff in Helsinki had been requested to gather information for Buschenhagen's Renntier planning. In early October Rossing drew attention to the complete lack of Finnish preparation for the defense of the Petsamo region in any future Soviet-Finnish conflict. No military construction was in progress there; existing trenches and barbed wire obstacles were neglected and deteriorating. The Military Attache summed up his estimate of Finland's operational intentions in the far north as, "Surrender of the territory north of Rovaniemi-Kemijarvi. Attempt to maintain land bridge with Sweden."<sup>13</sup> Von Falkenhorst, too, was seeking information for the Renntier project, requesting specific military and economic details directly from the Finnish government. His requests were considered, in a meeting under the direction of Ryti, by the Finnish cabinet on 23 October. The possibility that the OKW might pass on such information to the Soviets was of grave concern, but the requests were partially fulfilled.<sup>14</sup>

Even as the planning for a possible campaign in the east was developing, the



OKW launched, in October, a major program for the development of adequate road and rail facilities in eastern and northern Europe in anticipation of the heavy military traffic necessitated by any invasion.<sup>15</sup> Codenamed "Otto", the program saw the shift of rail-construction troops, snow-removal equipment, and ferry boats to Finnmark.<sup>16</sup> For the air defense of the Arctic area, FBK Kirkenes was established.<sup>17</sup> The troop buildup in north Norway continued apace. On 19 October Jodl informed the AA that an infantry division would be soon bound for Finnmark via Norway and that the OKL transit was complete, some four thousand eight hundred troops with five hundred eighty-seven vehicles having passed through Finland.<sup>18</sup> Buschenhagen exhibited some concern over the shift of the 196th Division along the Norwegian coast to Finnmark; on 28 October he requested extra troop transports for the movement and asked for additional OKM and OKL defensive cover.<sup>19</sup> On 29 October Buschenhagen's request was again noted; he expressed considerable apprehension over possible enemy strikes at the six thousand troops while at sea.<sup>20</sup>

On 22 October, the new head of Op.Abt. OKW, Colonel Heusinger, reorganized the department in preparation for projected eastern operations. "Gr. I" was to be concerned with eastern Europe and section "I-Nord" under Captain Brandt was assigned responsibility for "operations of strategy in the north-eastern theater," comprising north Russia, Finland, Sweden Norway, and sections of Poland.<sup>21</sup> AOK Norwegen and AG Nord would come under the command of "I-Nord."

On 29 October, the Op.Abt. OKH submitted a completed strategic survey to Halder. In the study the officers formalized their views regarding the most appropriate strategy for an eastern campaign. The study noted the Russo-German strength ratio, problems inherent in the vast terrain, limitations of time, current intelligence, and an analysis of objectives. The survey concluded that the main effort should be concentrated north of the Pripyat Marshes with the principal thrust directed via Smolensk towards Moscow. Factors for this analysis included the disposition of only thirty Red Army divisions in the Baltic States, the

superior transportation network, logistic considerations, and possible diversionary strikes by Finnish-German forces.<sup>22</sup> Even among the lesser staff officers, it would seem, the assumption of Finnish cooperation with the invading forces was automatic.

During November the OKH was diverted from planning for the invasion of the Soviet Union by preparations for a potential armed intervention in the Balkans. However, this diversion did not affect the training and equipping of the newly activated front-line divisions which was under way.<sup>23</sup> Of some concern to the OKH leadership, notably Halder and Paulus, was the increasing unease of the Soviet Union. On 2 November, Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan, People's Commissar for Foreign Trade, complained to Schnurre that while the Reich was not willing to deliver war material to the Red Army, it was supplying arms and equipment to Finland. This was the first hint that Soviet officialdom was aware of the arms contract, a matter both the AA and the WiRu had hoped to keep secret.<sup>24</sup> Soviet pressure on Finland in relation to the Petsamo negotiations increased significantly; von Schulenburg theorized on 1 November that "the Soviet interest in the Petsamo region is purely political, especially in view of the proximity of the sole icefree port of Murmansk."<sup>25</sup> And in November came the first Soviet inquiries, directed at General Koestring, Military Attache in the DGM, on troop concentrations in former Polish and Norwegian provinces. Koestring replied, as ordered, that the troop movements were incidental to redeployment following the conclusion of the campaign in the west and the requirements of military occupation of Norway and Poland.<sup>26</sup>

Troubled by the gradual divergence of Soviet and Nazi interests, von Ribbentrop wished to initiate a high-level conference with the Soviet leadership. Hitler was less than enthusiastic. As von Ribbentrop later wrote, "First I wanted to bring about a Stalin-Hitler meeting, but this came to nothing because Hitler said that Stalin could not leave Russia and he could not leave Germany. Then I wrote a long letter to Stalin ... and invited Molotov to Berlin."<sup>27</sup> Von Schulenburg returned to his post at the DGM on 17 October, carrying von Ribbentrop's

letter.<sup>28</sup> The Soviet government displayed no hesitation in accepting; it was agreed that Molotov would arrive in Berlin for talks on 12 November. Hitler had few illusions; on 12 November, the very day Molotov arrived, he informed the military in Directive Eighteen that "Political discussions have been initiated with the aim of clarifying Russia's attitude for the time being. Irrespective of the results of these discussions, all preparations for the East which have been verbally ordered will be continued. Instructions on this will follow as soon as the general outlines of the Army's operational plans have been submitted to me and received my approval."<sup>29</sup> Thus, with von Ribbentrop hopeful and Hitler pessimistic, did Molotov arrive for the conferences.

The first meeting with Molotov served only to bolster Hitler's pessimism and deflate von Ribbentrop's hopes. One of the first topics to arise, and one of the most volatile, was the German position vis-a-vis Finland. Molotov stated that "the German-Russian agreement of last year could be regarded as fulfilled, except for one point, namely, Finland."<sup>30</sup> He inquired of the Fuhrer as to whether, in the view of the Reich, the German-Russian agreement of 1939, so far as it concerned Finland, was still in force. Molotov stated that the issue of Finland "could be solved without war, but there must be neither German troops in Finland nor political demonstrations ... against the Soviet Russian government."<sup>31</sup> Further, the Soviets viewed as political demonstrations "the dispatch of Finnish delegations to Germany or reception of prominent Finns in Germany."<sup>32</sup> Indeed, in the opinion of the Soviet government, the Soviet-Nazi Non-Aggression Pact represented but a partial solution to the Finnish situation.<sup>33</sup> Pressing, Molotov then declared that "the Soviet government would like to know, too, why German forces had been sent to Finland. And why had this serious step also been taken without consultation with Moscow?"<sup>34</sup> In response, Hitler pleaded lack of information and pretended not to know there were any German troops in Finland. "A conflict in the Baltic Sea area," he said vaguely, "would complicate German-Soviet relations."<sup>35</sup> "But the Soviet Union is not preparing to disrupt the peace in this



region and is in no way threatening Finland," Molotov objected, "we are concerned with ensuring peace and genuine security in that region. The German government should take this fact into account if it is interested in the normal development of Soviet-German relations."<sup>36</sup> Hitler allowed the topic to lapse and passed on to conflicts of interest in the Balkans.

Molotov's visit to Berlin in November obviously unsettled the Finnish government, who feared a detente developing between the two giants. On 12 November Edvin Lundstrom, the Counselor of the Finnish Berlin Legation, called on Woermann and on Grundherr, handing them duplicate notes.<sup>37</sup> "The Finnish Legation assumes that political conversations regarding continental Europe are under way at the present time. In case these conversations also affect Finland, Finland would appreciate it if Germany could strengthen Finland's position in the course of them. At the same time the Finnish Legation wanted to give assurance that Finland was on the one hand eager to strengthen and deepen the relations with Germany and on the other wanted nothing else in connection with Russia but to be able to live and work in peace within the area belonging to her after the last peace treaty."<sup>38</sup> Long after the conference, the Finnish government still displayed some apprehension in regard to the recent Soviet-Nazi talks and the Reich acted to allay these. On 18 November von Weizsacker recorded that Kivimaki had visited his office in regard to rumors which were circulating in Berlin's diplomatic community to the effect that the Molotov visit had had "serious consequences for Finland." Von Weizsacker assured him that nothing had transpired during the visit, as far as he knew, which could justify these rumors.<sup>39</sup> On the same day, von Blucher met with Witting to report on the Molotov-Hitler conversations. Von Blucher declared that Soviet Russia now understood that Germany did not wish complications in the north, that peace had to be maintained, that German-Finnish friendship was strong, and that Finland had nothing to fear.<sup>40</sup> At the Wilhelmstrasse, von Blucher had been told by von Weizsacker that Finland was safe; Hitler had held "his umbrella firmly over Finland."<sup>41</sup>

Molotov returned to the Finnish issue during his final meeting with Hitler on 13 November. "The Soviet government insisted on being informed of the true aims behind the sending of German troops into a country immediately bordering on such a prominent industrial and cultural center as Leningrad. What was the meaning of this occupation of Finland by German troops? According to information in Soviet possession, these troops were not preparing to move into Norway; on the contrary, they were fortifying their position along the Soviet border. Therefore, the Soviet government insisted on the immediate evacuation of German troops from Finland."<sup>42</sup> Hitler replied that Germany recognized that, "politically", Finland was of primary interest to the Soviet Union. However, two points were crucial in regard to Finland: "1. For the duration of the war Germany was greatly interested in the deliveries of nickel and lumber from Finland; and 2. Germany did not desire any new conflict in the Baltic Sea which would further curtail her freedom of movement. It was completely incorrect to assert that Finland was occupied by German troops. Troops were being transported to Kirkenes via Finland, of which fact Russia had been officially informed. However, as soon as the transit of troop contingents to be sent had been completed, no additional troops would be sent through Finland."<sup>43</sup> Hitler, obviously, considered the matter closed. Summarizing, von Ribbentrop declared that "the Fuhrer had declared that Finland remained in the sphere of influence of Russia and that Germany would not maintain any troops there; Germany had nothing to do with demonstrations of Finland against Russia, but was exerting her influence in the opposite direction; and the collaboration of the two countries was the decisive problem of long-range importance, which in the past had already resulted in great advantages for Russia. There was actually no reason at all for making an issue of the Finnish question. Strategically, all of Russia's wishes had been satisfied by her peace treaty with Finland."<sup>44</sup>

Thus Molotov departed for Moscow, never to return. Von Ribbentrop, desperately disappointed, later wrote, "Molotov's visit to Berlin did not take place

under as lucky a star as I had hoped for. He made a very strong demand for a free hand in Finland. Hitler had not briefed me on his attitude to the Finnish question, in which right was undoubtedly on Molotov's side. But the Fuhrer did not want to give up Finland and probably also believed that he could not do without Finnish nickel. Our discussion Hitler-Molotov became fairly stubborn ..."<sup>45</sup> Goring wrote, of a conversation with Hitler following Molotov's departure, that the Fuhrer told him, "I can't let Russia attack Finland anew and square it with the German people. If Russia has all of Finland, we shall be outflanked on the north, ... and the first thing we know she'll be in Narvik."<sup>46</sup> And perhaps the final word on the Hitler-Molotov conference was made by Halder, who wrote on 16 November that any further Soviet move against Finland "would constitute a casus belli for Germany."<sup>47</sup>

Even as Molotov was objecting to the presence of German troops in Finland to Hitler, on 13 November Reiner Kreutzwald, who was in Berlin, informed the OKW that Witting would approve an extension of the now defunct transit agreement to cover a north-south transit of Finland by military personnel based in Finnmark.<sup>48</sup> The OKW wished to keep the line open, as a secure transport and supply system. On 19 November a committee of Finnish officers, headed by Colonel Stewen and Colonel Paasonen, and German officers, headed by Colonel Rossing and Captain Berling, convened to reach a military agreement on this transit extension.<sup>49</sup> By 22 November, both sides were satisfied and a draft military agreement was signed. The details were simple. German personnel, on furlough or extended sick leave, were permitted to travel via the Finnish rail and road system. The port of entry and exit was Turku, being the only harbor open for the winter transit.<sup>50</sup> German troops travelling in both directions were never to exceed the number of seven hundred fifty.<sup>51</sup> The OKW was to construct accommodations for five hundred men at Rovaniemi, Sodankyla, and Ivalo.<sup>52</sup> Depots were to be established at Pori and Rauma and an OKW representative installed at Turku.<sup>53</sup> The two-way transit was to be initiated on 9 December.<sup>54</sup> A pre-arranged exchange of diplomatic notes took



place on 21 November to provide the agreement with the political cover the Finns were so concerned about. The note read briefly, "Referring to the discussions and the exchange of notes in Berlin on 22.9.40 ... has the honor to declare that the transits of leavemen on the route Kirkenes-Rovaniemi-Turku and in the opposite direction are now to begin."<sup>55</sup>

On 23 November, Veltjens, again in a semi-official capacity, arrived in Helsinki.<sup>56</sup> Veltjens confined his talks to the military leaders, chiefly to Mannerheim.<sup>57</sup> He reported the course of the Molotov-Hitler conferences, and delivered Goring's opinions on the Petsamo situation. He was informed that the Finnish president, Kyosti Kallio, was to resign shortly due to ill health.<sup>58</sup> He was supplied with intelligence reports on the damage inflicted by OKL air raids on London, prepared by the Finnish military attache there, for Goring.<sup>59</sup> Yet all of this was secondary to his mission, to complete the final deliveries of arms and evaluate the Finnish military position. The last arms shipment was to arrive on 10 December. When the Finnish authorities expressed the desire to continue the deliveries, Veltjens agreed to present their views to the WiRu. Veltjens drafted a recommendation to establish a second arms supply program along the lines the Finns desired, stressing the need for artillery and aircraft.<sup>60</sup> Veltjens departed for Berlin on 26 November.

Throughout November and December the German military establishment was engaged in numerous organizational matters, improving its positions in the Arctic North. Winter clothing, including skis and anoraks, were issued to the troops of the Gebirgskorps.<sup>61</sup> The four hundred fifty bed hospital ship "Stuttgart" was stationed in Kirkenes harbor.<sup>62</sup> The Gebirgskorps was rearmed with the new 33/40 carbines in December.<sup>63</sup> It was agreed that the bulk of the supply of the Gebirgskorps could now be carried out via the Arctic Highway.<sup>64</sup> One hundred eighty OKH personnel labored through late November and early December to complete the one hundred fifty barracks, each capable of housing fifty men, along the transit route through Finland.<sup>65</sup> And by mid-December troops were traveling south along

the transit via Ivalo, Sodankyla, Rovaniemi, Oulu, then on to Vlliviesko, Haapamaki, Tampere, and departing Turku for the Fatherland.<sup>66</sup> The north resonated with military activity.

The OKH strategic survey was tested in a General Staff exercise conducted by Paulus. Staff officers responsible for drafting the OKH plan acted as group leaders. Paulus divided the exercise into three phases: the first began 29 November with the invasion and the initial battles near the border; the second, commencing 3 December, continued the offensive operations to the Kiev-Minsk-Lake Peipus line; and the last, staged 7 December, dealt with reaching the final objectives of the campaign. After each phase Paulus indicated the premises for the start of the next part of the exercise by explaining the phase line that had been reached, the condition of the German troops and allied forces, the supply situation, and intelligence estimates.<sup>67</sup> The general conclusion to the exercise was "that the German forces were barely sufficient for the purpose."<sup>68</sup> Paulus admitted to Halder that the final objective, Volga-Archangel, was "far beyond anything the German forces could hope to achieve."<sup>69</sup> Major General Eduard Wagner prepared logistical exercises in conjunction with the OKH staff exercise, and completed an OKH logistical plan as a counterpart to the strategic survey. Thomas of OKW noted in November 1940, in a report on the economic implications of a campaign in the east, the shortages of strategic supplies the Wehrmacht and allied forces would face.<sup>70</sup>

In early December Hitler requested an OKH briefing on the strategic survey. On 5 December, during a four hour conference, von Brauchitsch and Halder presented the OKH plan, despite the fact that it was still the subject of study and modification by Paulus.<sup>71</sup> In his verbal report, Halder first reviewed the topographical features of the theater and noted that most objectives lay in the Ukraine, in Moscow, and around Leningrad. Total assault forces numbered one hundred and five infantry divisions and thirty-two panzer and motorized infantry divisions advancing in three AG.<sup>72</sup> Hitler took it for granted that the attack would commence in the spring of 1941; when von Brauchitsch pointed out the danger of a two-front

war, the Fuhrer declared that the inferiority of the Red Army made the present time "especially favorable" for a Wehrmacht offensive.<sup>73</sup> Hitler agreed to the basic plan thus presented; however, he stressed the importance of preventing the Soviet Army from making a planned withdrawal; Soviet military potential had to be eliminated and its regeneration made impossible. Therefore, Soviet forces in the Baltic States had to be isolated and eliminated. In contrast to the OKH studies, he suggested that the central forces advance north during the envelopment phase to assist in isolating the Red forces in the Baltic and strike at Leningrad. The idea of securing the Baltic region prior to further advances involved a major departure from the OKH plans, and the military accepted, overtly, the proposal.<sup>74</sup> Hitler stated that Finnish forces would participate in this operation; in addition, a secondary attack in the far north was to be launched by three German divisions.<sup>75</sup> "To deprive the Baltic fleet of its main base, the Russian war effort of the armament production of the city and, above all, the Russian Army of a strategic assembly area for a counter offensive,"<sup>76</sup> these were the goals for the massive assault on the Baltic area; to this could be added the logistic problems sea transport over a secure Baltic route would solve.<sup>77</sup> Upon resuming his report Halder pointed out that according to recent data the assembly of forces would take eight weeks and that OKH preparations could not be concealed from the enemy after mid-April at the latest.<sup>78</sup> Hitler, at the conclusion of the briefing, gave official approval to the plan.

The next day Jodl instructed the AL to prepare a directive based on the OKH strategic survey.<sup>79</sup> On 12 December this draft was submitted to Jodl under the undistinguished cover name "Fritz".<sup>80</sup> Jodl reviewed the first draft, made a few insignificant changes and ordered a revised draft prepared.<sup>81</sup> The chiefs of staff for each planned AG were ordered to work, without consulting fellow officers, on problems involved in the campaign; their findings were scrutinized at an OKH headquarters conference on 13 December and 14 December. A number of their suggestions were incorporated into the revised draft.<sup>82</sup> On 16 December Warlimont submitted



the revised draft to Jodl; and on 17 December Jodl presented the OKW draft directive to the Fuhrer for his consideration.<sup>83</sup> In sequence, the directive would be numbered twenty-one, if approved.

Halder met with von Falkenhorst to learn of preparations in the far north. Dietl, so Halder was informed, could command four divisions from Norway in an advance into Soviet Russia, these being the 163rd Division (Engelbrecht commanding), the 199th Division (Kempski), the 2nd Geb.Div. (Feurstein), and the 3rd Geb. Div. (Kreysing). The two infantry divisions would be moved by the Swedish rail system to positions in the Salla region of Finland. The armored brigade "SS-Nord" would be held as reserve. All were to be in place by 1 April 1941.<sup>84</sup> AOK Norwegen had a detailed plan for Swedish transit ready for activation.<sup>85</sup> Buschenhagen, in the December Tatigkeitsbericht, noted that "because of new instructions ... by OKW and OKH, the theoretical preparations for Renntier are being expanded." Now envisioned was a drive to the White Sea with four divisions launching twin attacks, one from the Petsamo region and one from the Salla region. "Silberfuchs", as the plan came to be codenamed, was at this early stage hampered by lack of intelligence. Further, on 12 December, Buschenhagen informed Halder that only one and one half divisions of the Gebirgskorps would be available for the operation; security for north Norway was essential.<sup>87</sup> Thus, even before the issuance of Directive 21, on the basis of oral instructions given Buschenhagen and von Falkenhorst, AOK Norwegen understood its mission as a broadening of the theoretical Renntier plan.<sup>88</sup>

In anticipation of a spring offensive against the Soviet Union, the OKL established "Luftgaue Nord Norwegen" at Bardufoss. This air district was assigned the massive task of preparing airfields and other ground stations in the far north, including stockpiling supplies at Finnish airfields which might be used by the Luftwaffe once the offensive was launched. Since a suitable staff for combat operations was lacking, a tactical command staff was organized as "Luftgaue Kirkenes" in mid-December under the direct command of the Fifth Luftflotte. It rap-

idly became apparent that only the airfields at Banak and Kirkenes were suitable for OKL concentration in northern Norway. Initially "Luftgaue Kirkenes" was directed to study operational possibilities for establishment of total Luftwaffe air superiority over the coastal portions of north Norway and Finland, operations against hostile land and sea forces, operations against the Arctic Canal and Murmansk and Kandalaksha and Archangel, protection of German and Finnish shipping.<sup>89</sup> The OKM, due to shortages of strategic materials and the massive effort in the west, after several studies was only able to allocate five U-boats, several mine-layers, and a few dozen E-boats to the eastern Baltic.<sup>90</sup> Raeder did not express much optimism over their role in the coming invasion.

On 16 December Lieutenant General Talvela, accompanied by the Finnish military attache in Berlin Colonel Horn, met briefly with Halder.<sup>91</sup> Talvela revealed that he had, while in Berlin, already visited Goring twice. The meetings were purely political in nature; they spoke of support for Mannerheim in the upcoming presidential election,<sup>92</sup> of the Communist threat within Finland, of the Petsamo negotiations,<sup>93</sup> and of the proposed Swedish-Finnish union.<sup>94</sup> These meetings had been cordial and informal.<sup>95</sup> The Talvela meeting with Halder touched on these same political problems. Talvela did review the military situation in Finland, noting the problematic defense of the Aaland chain, the Petsamo region, and the Salla pocket. He reiterated Finland's desire for long-range artillery and combat aircraft, and further, declared that Sweden could free five divisions for operations within Finland, if Germany's attitude towards Sweden were less belligerent.<sup>96</sup> Halder, on his part, requested information regarding the time requirements for an offensive by Finnish forces towards the southeast.<sup>97</sup> His probe went unanswered. Talvela returned to Helsinki within a few days.<sup>98</sup>

On 17 December Jodl presented the draft directive to Hitler, who made "a considerable alteration" with regard to the mission of the two AG committed north of the Pripyet Marshes.<sup>99</sup> Hitler ordered that, as soon as the Soviet forces facing AG Centre were broken through, that AG Centre was to transfer considerable

mobile forces north to aid AG Nord in the annihilation of enemy forces in the Baltic. He wished to clear Soviet forces from the Baltic in order to "keep it clear for imports of value to the war effort and because it provided the shortest line of communication to Finland."<sup>100</sup> Hitler also redesignated "Fritz" by the term "Barbarossa".<sup>101</sup> On 18 December, after the necessary changes had been incorporated, Hitler signed Directive 21, setting the attack - or rather, the completion of all preparations - for 15 May 1941, B-Tag.<sup>102</sup>

Directive 21 outlined three main lines of attack from Finland. Like the operations on the main front, they were based on what was operationally desirable rather than what was feasible in view of the logistical problems involved. Furthermore, they bore little relation to the aims of the Finns. In the far north, the operation proposed in August had as its aims the German occupation of Petsamo and later the investment of Murmansk. To the south, an attempt would be made to sever the Murmansk railway, if Sweden permitted German divisions transit of her territory prior to B-Tag.<sup>103</sup> For the Finnish Army, numerous tasks: "Finland will cover the concentration of the redeployed German North Group (detachments of Group XXI) and will operate in conjunction with them. Finland will be responsible for eliminating Hanko." [Section II, paragraph 3.] "It will be the duty of the main body of the Finnish Army, in conjunction with the advance of the German north flank, to hold down the strongest possible Russian forces by an attack to the west of, or on both sides of, Lake Ladoga." [Section III, part A.] "Further, Finnish forces were to take part in the advance on the Murmansk railway."<sup>104</sup> Whether Finland was aware of it or not, Directive 21 made it clear that the Reich expected whole-hearted Finnish cooperation during "Unternehmen Barbarossa".

Shortly before Christmas 1940 Dietl was informed of the aim to attack the Soviet Union in the spring. His forces, he learned, were to advance beyond Petsamo, directed at Murmansk.<sup>105</sup> He informed the five staff officers of his command, the division commanders, and their adjutants. After a study of the chapter "Rote Offensivstellung am Eismeer" of the book Russlands Griff um Nordeuropa,



which passed from hand to hand among these officers, they noted several problems inherent in any operation against Murmansk. The first was the terrain; the second was how to keep the Soviets in doubt of operations prior to the advance itself; the third, and most critical, was the logistic difficulties.<sup>106</sup>

On 31 December Kivimaki met von Weizsacker. "After conveying his New Year's greetings, the Finnish Minister ... expressed hope for his country. He stated that in his homeland people were now reassured, because they thought they knew that in a future conflict with Russia they would not stand alone."<sup>107</sup> Little did the people of Finland realize that the Reich was preparing the anticipated "future conflict with Russia" even as the new year of war began.

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Footnotes---

1. Robert D. Heinl, Dictionary of Military and Naval Quotations (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute, 1966), p.218.
2. Felix Kersten, The Kersten Memoirs 1940-1945 (London: Hutchinson and Co. Ltd., 1956), p.147.
3. Sontag and Beddie, op.cit., p.202.
4. AA DGFP, vol.XI, pp.236-237.
5. Arnold and Veronica Toynbee, Hitler's Europe; Survey of International Affairs 1939-1946 (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), p.576.
6. Sontag and Beddie, op.cit., p.202.
7. Ibid, p.204.
8. AA DGFP, vol.XI, p.245.
9. Sontag and Beddie, op.cit., p.204.
10. The Finns, of course, refused. However Soviet agents in Finland maintained a railway count on German troop movements. The number of Russian agents in Finland greatly increased during late 1940 and early 1941, a sign of the concern the Kremlin felt towards Finnish-German friendship. Whaley, op.cit., p.28.
11. Krosby, op.cit., pp.80-81.
12. On 8 October, von Weizsacker wrote a memorandum in which the "daily increasing pressure" exerted on Finland by the Soviet Union was emphasized. He noted

that the Finnish government might be compelled to give in, a situation which would have serious consequences for the Reich, both economically and militarily. Germany's nick[?] interests "would be completely wiped out" and the establishment of exclusive territorial control in the Petsamo region would give the Red Army a military position detrimental to OKW interests. The military, notably Goring, had expressed concern over this point. "It will now become necessary to go beyond that the current German support and to strengthen the Finnish will to resist." Von Ribbentrop's reaction to the memo was not positive. He did not want these issues "to become a controversial point with the Russians at the present moment;" therefore, the Reich should not commit itself to the Finns "any more than we have so far." He stated that he would, however, reexamine the problem in about ten days. Krosby, op.cit., pp.81-82.

13. See T-312/1010/9206144-47. "Ergebnis der Besprechung mit Oberst Rossing."
14. Wuorinen, op.cit., p.95.
15. Whaley, op.cit., p.16.
16. See T-312/992/9184793-94. "Wehrmachtbefehlshaber Norwegen - Norwegen Festungen"; T-312/992/9184874 and T-312/992/9184875. "Tatigkeitsbericht der Oberquartiermeister - Abteilung der Gruppe XXI fur den Monat November 1940."
17. See T-312/992/9184759. "Wehrmachtbefehlshaber Norwegen - Sonderbefehl O.Qu./Qu. 2 Nr. 138/40."
18. AA DGFP, vol.XI, p.329.
19. OKW KTB, vol.I, p.133.
20. Ibid, vol.I, p.137.
21. Leach, op.cit., p.82.
22. Blau, op.cit., pp.14-17.
23. Ibid, p.17.
24. AA DGFP, vol.XI, p.456.
25. Krosby, op.cit., p.88.
26. Blau, op.cit., pp.17-18.
27. Joachim von Ribbentrop, Zwischen London und Moskau (Munich: Druffel-Verlag, 1953), p.148.
28. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.164.
29. Wheeler-Bennett, op.cit., p.510. Weinberg has suggested that, at the time of the Molotov visit, the Fuhrer had definitely decided to attack Russia and that this resolve was not to be shaken. Weinberg, op.cit., p.144. It would seem, however, that while Hitler was quite prepared to invade the Soviet Union, he would have deferred this campaign if the Soviets were willing to accede totally to his domination of Europe on all levels. Only a complete Soviet diplomatic surrender could halt the OKW/OKH planning. As Hitler realized, such a surrender was improbable and the Molotov visit merely proved his intuition true.

30. Sontag and Beddie, op.cit., p.232. It should be noted that at least one historian, John Lukacs, holds that "There is some reason to believe, though we have no written evidence to that effect, that Hitler did not understand the secret protocol to mean that Finland would be assigned to Russia completely, lock, stock, and barrel, and that Stalin knew this." John Lukacs, The Last European War, September 1939/December 1941 (Garden City: Anchor Press - Doubleday, 1976), pp.64-65. This thesis has some merit and, if true, would necessitate a reevaluation of the Soviet-Nazi relations of the period.
31. Lundin, op.cit., p.93.
32. Ibid, p.93.
33. Sontag and Beddie, op.cit., p.232.
34. Bialer, op.cit., pp.123-124.
35. Robert Payne, The Life and Death of Adolf Hitler (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1973), p.413.
36. Ibid, p.413.
37. Krosby, op.cit., pp.93-94.
38. AA DGFP, vol.XI, p.527.
39. Krosby, op.cit., p.94.
40. Blucher, op.cit., pp.206-207.
41. Ibid, p.205.
42. Bialer, op.cit., p.125.
43. Sontag and Beddie, op.cit., p.235. As Hitler was well aware, the last OKL transit had been completed on 16 October and only supply troops, not yet withdrawn, remained in Finland in November 1940.
44. Sontag and Beddie, op.cit., p.242.
45. Ribbentrop, op.cit., p.148.
46. Dewitt C. Poole, "Light on Nazi Foreign Policy," Foreign Affairs, vol.25 (October 1946), p.148.
47. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.183.
48. Jalanti, op.cit., pp.211-212.
49. Wuorinen, op.cit., p.93.
50. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.179.
51. Jalanti, op.cit., pp.212-213.
52. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, pp.179-180.
53. Jalanti, op.cit., pp.212-213.



54. Ibid, p.213. The first train departed Turku bound northward on 9 January 1941.
55. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.179. In point of fact, no reference to furlough transit was made in either the military or diplomatic agreements covering the OKL transit.
56. Ziemke, op.cit., p.117.
57. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.181.
58. Ibid, pp.181-182. Kallio resigned on 27 November and elections to replace him were scheduled for 19 December.
59. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.182.
60. Jalanti, op.cit., pp.207-208. Though Veltjens drafted this proposal in November, he did not present it to the OKW authorities until January 1941. He did report the Finnish wishes, "especially for two or three batteries of long-range heavy artillery" to the AA during his formal report on 7 December. He also reported on the damage reports that he had passed to the OKL. These proved of value and "von Blucher was asked to obtain further reports of this type" from London, if necessary through Rossing's contacts in Helsinki, and communicate with the AA. AA DGFP, vol.XI, p.813.
61. T-312/992/9184879. "Tatigkeitsbericht der Oberquartiermeister - Abteilung der Gruppe XXI fur den Monat November 1940."
62. T-312/992/9184885. "Tatigkeitsbericht der Oberquartiermeister - Abteilung der Gruppe XXI fur den Monat November 1940."; and T-312/992/9184916. "Versorgungslage der Gruppe XXI nach dem Stande v. 30.11.40."
63. T-312/992/9185029. "Tatigkeitsbericht der Oberquartiermeister - Abteilung der Gruppe XXI fur den Monat Dezember."
64. T-312/992/9184903. "Versorgungslage der Gruppe XXI nach dem Stande v. 30.11.40."
65. T-312/992/9184910. "Versorgungslage der Gruppe XXI nach dem Stande v. 30.11.40."
66. T-312/992/9185030-31. "Anlage 1. zum Tatigkeitsbericht Dezember Besprechungspunkte O.Qu. - Bespr. am 9.12.1940."
67. Blau, op.cit., pp.19-20.
68. Leach, op.cit., p.103.
69. Ibid, p.106.
70. Blau, op.cit., pp.20-21.
71. William L. Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), p.810.
72. Blau, op.cit., p.18.
73. Leach, op.cit., p.84.

74. Ibid, pp.108-109. Nevertheless, the manner in which the OKH leadership later directed operations towards Moscow makes unclear whether the Army's ready acceptance of Hitler's demand for securing the Baltic was too facile. For more on this question consult Leach, op.cit., pp.112-114.
75. Blau, op.cit., p.19.
76. Leach, op.cit., p.112.
77. Ibid, p.110. For later advances the Baltic sea-route for supply to AG Nord was crucial.
78. Blau, op.cit., p.19.
79. Ziemke, op.cit., p.122.
80. Whaley, op.cit., pp.17-18.
81. Blau, op.cit., pp.21-22.
82. Ibid, p.20.
83. Ibid, pp.21-22.
84. Halder KTB, vol.II, pp.217-218. Orders for the transfer of the SS battalion were issued in late December. OKW KTB, vol.I, p.221.
85. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.185.
86. See T-312/992/9185675-81. "Tatigkeitsbericht des Armee-Oberkommandos Norwegen/Abt. Ia in der Zeit vorn 1.12. - 31.12.1940."
87. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.231.
88. Ziemke, op.cit., p.124.
89. Hermann Plocher, The German Air Force Versus Russia, 1941 (New York: Arno Press, 1965), pp.189-190.
90. Leach, op.cit., pp.94-95.
91. The date given in the OKW KTB, 18 December, is incorrect. The error is probably due to the state of strained communications between the OKW and the OKH. OKW KTB, vol.I, p.1187.
92. On 27 November Kallio had handed in his resignation. Nominations for the post were numerous, but the number of serious candidates was soon narrowed to Ryti, Svinhufvud, Mannerheim, Kivimaki, and Paasikivi. Even while official Germany held to the policy that, "Of the Finnish Presidential elections no notice is to be made;" the AA clearly would have preferred the election of Kivimaki. Willi A. Boelcke, Kriegspropaganda 1939-1941 (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1966), p.587. On 6 December, the Soviet government declared that the election of Tanner, Kivimaki, Mannerheim, or Svinhufvud would be viewed as a hostile action and a sign that Finland did not wish to fulfill the terms of the Moscow treaty. Germany covertly supported Ryti and, on 19 December, Risto Ryti was elected President of Finland, garnering two hundred ninety-eight of a possible three hundred electoral votes. The new cabinet formed under Jukka Wilhelm Rangell contained a representative of the fascist Isanmaallinen Kansan Liike (IKL). For more on

the elections, see Marvin Rintala, Four Finns (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), pp.108-109; Blucher, op.cit., pp.208-210; AA DGFP, vol.XI.

93. On 11 December I.G. Farbenindustrie agreed that the Soviets should be given the texts of agreements allotting the nickel to German industry. The AA concurred on 14 December, with the proviso that the Finnish government present them. See Krosby, op.cit., pp.101-102.

94. On 29 October, the AA was informed of the investigation by interested parties in Sweden and in Finland of the possibility of a political union of the two nations. The German government advised against pursuit of this project, noting the possible adverse reaction of the Soviet Union. See, for more, AA DGFP, vol. XI, p.842 and p.959.

95. AA DGFP, vol.XI, pp.917-918; Jalanti, op.cit., pp.233-234.

96. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.233.

97. AA DGFP, vol.XI, p.918.

98. Ziemke states, "The presence of Talvela in Berlin in December raises the possibility of Finnish participation in (or knowledge of) the formulation of Directive No.21. From the existing evidence, it appears that the visit was largely, though - at least from the German view - not entirely coincidental. Talvela's mission was to maintain the personal Mannerheim-Goring contact established by Veltjens. That matters of more concrete interest to Germany were at least touched on is indicated in Halder's request for information regarding the time the Finns would need to mobilize inconspicuously for an attack toward the south-east." Ziemke, op.cit., p.124.

99. Blau, op.cit., p.21.

100. Warlimont, op.cit., p.138.

101. Leach, op.cit., pp.90-91.

102. Whaley, op.cit., pp.17-18.

103. Leach, op.cit., p.184.

104. H.R. Trevor-Roper, Hitler's War Directives 1939-1945 (London: Sidgwick and Jackson Ltd., 1964), pp.50-51.

105. Bernhard von Lossberg, Im Wehrmacht-fuhrungsstab (Hamburg: H.H. Nolke Verlag, 1950), p.113.

106. Hess, op.cit., pp.25-28.

107. AA DGFP, vol.XI, p.995.



### Third Phase: January 1941 - May 1941

"The triangle Finland-Germany-Russia is the figure on which the fate of Finland will be decided." - Wipert von Blucher.<sup>1</sup>

"The more German Soldiers coming into the country, the quieter I lay in my bed at night." - attributed to an anonymous Finnish matron.<sup>2</sup>

By 1 January 1941 the various German command structures were under no illusions as to the goal of military strategy in Finland, namely operations against Soviet territory in the far north as an integral part of the Barbarossa plan. Two offensive forces were being developed, Gr. XXI in Kirkenes and the Finnish Army; operational aims for both were being debated in the corridors and offices of the OKW and the OKH, in Zossen and in Berlin. Sea and air support for these forces was being organized by the OKM and the OKL. A viable transport/communications system, with the transit route through Finland an essential component, had been created to supply their operations. Although countless details remained, although objectives were not yet finalized, OKW/OKH faced but two major tasks: the establishment of formal communications directly with the Finnish High Command and the coordination of final planning and preparation for B-Tag.

In early January, Veltjens approached the OKW to fulfill the promise made in November 1940. On 4 January Karl Baumann, of the Veltjens firm, arrived in Helsinki with a list of surplus arms available from the stocks of the OKW which he presented to Tera. The list had been approved by Thomas of WiRu, and included rifles, antitank artillery, 155 mm artillery, and corresponding munitions. Following this overture, General Thomas entered into correspondence with General Grandell, his counterpart on the Finnish General Staff, concerning specific details. In April Raatikainen, accompanied by Tera, toured OKW depots in France and Germany inspecting and evaluating surplus war material. Thus, one thousand

rifles, fifty 37mm antitank guns, twenty-four 75mm antiaircraft guns, and twenty 155mm heavy artillery pieces were selected and agreed upon. In early May 1941, a second arms contract - Vertrag 1188 - for direct delivery was signed by representatives of J. Veltjens Waffen und Munition and O.Y. Dahberg and Hilbert A.B. The arms were to arrive in Finland in June and would be paid for with proceeds of the German furlough transit.<sup>3</sup>

Rossing had been continuing his accumulation of data for AOK Norwegen. On 7 January he engaged General Aksel F. Airo, the Finnish quartermaster-general, on the topic of the Petsamo defenses.<sup>4</sup> The Petsamo region was definitely "not of any Finnish military interest," stated Airo. Since the Finnish Army did not have available sufficient reserves to defend the entire eastern border, the Petsamo region was to be abandoned without contest should Soviet forces incroach. The port facilities at Liinahamari and key bridges along the Arctic Highway were targeted for demolition and Finnish forces were to retreat southwestwards. Airo was reticent about, or ignorant of, any Finnish plans to blow the nickle works at Kolosjoki.<sup>5</sup> The information supplied by Rossing must have been regarded in Berlin as affirmation of the necessity of Renntier being carried out, whether the German Reich or the Soviet Union struck first.

On 16 January von Falkenhorst was in Berlin, meeting there with operations officers of the OKH and the OKW. His conference with Halder was brief, but decisive. After a review of measures instituted to provide for the defense of the coast of Norway, von Falkenhorst was ordered by the OKH to initiate planning extending Renntier into a broad strike at Murmansk and the Kola Peninsula.<sup>6</sup> For planning purposes, the staff of AOK Norwegen could assume the use of four German divisions and the active cooperation of local Finnish forces.<sup>7</sup> Further, it could be assumed that a supply depot would be situated in the Rovaniemi area. Halder noted that the question of command in the event of a German-Finnish war with the Soviet Union would merit consideration; the command structure was likely to be unnecessarily complex.<sup>8</sup> Operational study for "Silberfuchs" - officially desig-

nated as "joint operations against the Soviet Union from northern and central Finland"<sup>9</sup> - commenced upon von Falkenhorst's return to Oslo, under the supervision of Buschenhagen.

Meanwhile, sabers rattled in the north. As Soviet forces concentrated along the Finnish border, Mannerheim requested Ryti's authorization for mobilization, a request supported by his chief of staff and his minister of defense; Ryti, and Rangell, refused.<sup>10</sup> Halder noted on 18 January that the possibility existed "that Russia will react to our entry into Bulgaria with an attack on Finland."<sup>11</sup> On 19 January, Emil Karl Josef Wiehl of the Wi.Abt. reported from the AA, "the Soviet-Finnish negotiations on the Petsamo concession are approaching acute crisis stage," and that the Soviets had threatened "to settle the matter by resort to certain measures" if agreement could not be arrived at soon.<sup>12</sup> The next day the AA, after prompting by the OKW, asked Finland to take steps to provide protection for the Kolosjoki mining facilities. Witting and Walden agreed; a few Finnish military guards were posted on the grounds.<sup>13</sup> On the same day, 20 January, von Blucher reported from Helsinki "that Russian deliveries of flour, ocher, and oil cake to Finland have been abruptly stopped and that transit through Russia of Finnish goods for Turkey has been suspended by the Russians."<sup>14</sup> With Red Army forces remaining combat ready in the far north, von Blucher touched on the concern that these events had engendered in the OKW when he wrote on 26 January that "the plan of the Russians to obtain control of ... the nickle mines is also of significance in the military field. The facilities belonging to the nickle mines lie on both sides of the Arctic Highway. Because all German supply of provisions and munitions for northern Norway has recently been shifted to the Arctic Highway, supply operations would unavoidably become subject to Russian control if the Russians get possession of the mine facilities."<sup>15</sup> Essentially, if the Petsamo region fell to Soviet control, German forces in Finnmark would be out on a limb, literally. But of even greater concern was the distinct possibility that, if the Soviets advanced, Hitler would order Renntier launched. The OKW and the



OKH, for once in accord, viewed with dread any possibility of a German-Soviet clash prior to completion of the Barbarossa preparations.

On 27 January Buschenhagen completed the first rough draft of Silberfuchs. The plan assumed "at least the passive participation of Sweden" and "the active participation of Finland with an army capable of waging the war offensively according to operational directives given by Germany." The possibility of a Soviet strike against Finland prior to the operation was noted; that the Finnish Army would not actively defend the Petsamo region accepted.<sup>16</sup> It was assumed that the main burden of operations in the north was to fall upon the Finnish forces, which were projected to provide security for the south coast including the Aaland Islands, defend its border northwest of Lake Ladoga with weak forces, and unlease its main force for a drive east of Lake Ladoga towards the Svir River. The primary German attack would be directed along the route Rovaniemi to Salla to Kandalaksha to seal off Soviet forces in the Kola region and sever the Murmansk railway. The German units for this operation were to be designated as the 36th Korps (two divisions and SS-Nord) and the Finnish III Corps (two divisions). The SS Kampfgruppe was to provide mobile advanced security for the concentration of these forces. Finnish units would be utilized for a secondary strike from Suomussalmi via Ukhta towards Kem. On reaching the Murmansk railway at Kandalaksha, XXXVI Corps would turn north and, in conjunction with the Gebirgskorps, clear the Kola Peninsula and occupy Murmansk and Polarnyy. The Finnish III Corps, with attached German units, if possible linking with forces advancing on Kem, would advance south behind the eastern wing of the Finnish Army towards the Svir River. AOK Norwegen would provide all German units for the operations, retaining approximately five divisions for the defense of Norway; construction, supply, and communication troops along with horse-drawn and motor transport would have to be supplied from Germany. It was projected that the Finnish High Command would claim overall command since their troops would be the most prominent, in terms of numbers.<sup>17</sup> It was this initial draft that Buschenhagen presented on 1 February

1941 to the OKW and OKH when he travelled to Berlin to receive copies of "Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa." It would become the basis for all conceptions - and misconceptions - of German strategy in Finland.

On 27 January, Field Marshal Mannerheim received an invitation from the OKH to allow one of his staff officers to travel to Germany to lecture on the course and lessons of the Winter War.<sup>18</sup> Mannerheim selected no less an officer than Heinrichs, who departed immediately for Germany; however, the steamer he was aboard was delayed due to ice in the Baltic and the lectures were not begun until 30 January. A score of officers, from the OKW as well as the OKH, heard Heinrichs speak of tactical and strategic principles developed by the Finnish command for warfare in the far north.<sup>19</sup> Neither von Brauchitsch nor Halder, due to the official policy of the Reich, were able to attend the lectures.<sup>20</sup> However, Halder, following a ceremony to distribute decorations, spoke with Heinrichs, inviting the Finnish officer to a lunch to be followed by an afternoon meeting.<sup>21</sup> At one p.m. on 30 January Heinrichs and Halder met for lunch, a purely social occasion. Only for a moment did the conversation slip the bonds of the mundane; Halder recalled the German-Finnish "Waffenbruder" of 1918 and suggested that the situation could arise once more and then expressed hope that Finland would join the Reich in an advance on Leningrad. Heinrichs curtly replied that he was certain that neither Mannerheim nor Ryti would consent to such a venture.<sup>22</sup> At four-thirty p.m. Halder met with Heinrichs formally, with Paulus present. Halder requested, and received, the information that Finnish mobilization would take approximately nine days. "Quick mobilization, but not unobtrusive."<sup>23</sup> Colonel General Halder informed Heinrichs that one and a half divisions would advance via Petsamo against Murmansk and its railway.<sup>24</sup> Heinrichs told Halder that, in case of war, the Finnish Army would place four army corps in the Lake Ladoga region, sending five divisions south and three divisions north of the lake.<sup>25</sup> Three Finnish divisions would advance in the Lake Onega region and two divisions on the Soviet base at Hanko. Finnish intelligence estimated there to be fifteen divisions of the Red

Army currently massed along the border.<sup>26</sup> The meeting was brief and superficial. Yet the OKH had obtained information on the mobilization and projected deployment of the Finnish Army and a rebuff on the topic of cooperation in seizing Leningrad. And Heinrichs, in turn, was to report that there could be little doubt that the Reich was seriously considering a conflict with the Soviet Union, a war of aggression in which the German leaders expected Finland to be involved. When Heinrichs observed that any possible collaboration must be decided by the political leadership, Halder replied that it would be sensible for the military leadership to prepare for all contingencies meanwhile.<sup>27</sup> On this note, the meeting terminated.<sup>28</sup>

Coinciding with Heinrich's visit,<sup>29</sup> on 31 January the OKH submitted "Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa" (No. 050/41 g.K.), the deployment directive for their command, to Hitler. It assigned each army's orders and targets, designated AG headquarters, specified time limits and chain of command.<sup>30</sup> "The active participation of Rumania and Finland in a war against the Soviet Union is to be anticipated on the flanks of the operation."<sup>31</sup> Section Six concerns AOK Norwegen and emphasises the defense of Norway; in general terms, the OKH directive places the operations to secure Petsamo and strike at Murmansk and Kandalaksha under the command of von Falkenhorst.<sup>32</sup> The Gebirgskorps was to "advance into the Petsamo area at the start of the main operations, or if necessary even earlier, and, together with Finnish forces, defend it against attacks from the land, sea, and air ..." and to "envelop, and later, when sufficient assault forces are available, capture Murmansk as a base for offensive action."<sup>33</sup> By Section Nine, after Finland entered the war, the mission of the Finnish Army would be to take Hanko, cover the deployment of German forces, and - at the latest when AG Nord crossed the Dvina - launch an offensive east and west of Lake Ladoga, with the main effort eastward, to effect a junction with the German Army in the Volkhov-Tikhvin area.<sup>34</sup> AOK Norwegen units involved in the invasion were to begin moving into position on 15 February 1941, utilizing transit rights in Sweden and Finland.<sup>35</sup>



On 1 February 1941 Buschenhagen, after delivering the draft for Silberfuchs and obtaining a copy of the OKH deployment directive for AOK Norwegen, met with Halder.<sup>36</sup> A number of points were made, all relating to Silberfuchs. Buschenhagen explained that to position the Gebirgskorps for Renntier would require two months utilizing an optimum sea route, or three months utilizing a combination of sea and land routes, or five months utilizing the current transport facilities. The SS brigade could arrive in position at Kemijarvi in seven days. One month's supply of munitions and food would be carried by the advancing German units in Finland on B-Tag. Halder informed Buschenhagen that four divisions would be involved in the operation - one and a half divisions in the far north, two divisions in the Salla region, and the SS-Nord brigade. The possibility of a Soviet strike at Finland was discussed; a possibility which would, if ever a reality, automatically trigger the 2nd Geb.Div. occupation of the Petsamo region.<sup>37</sup>

Each AG had been informed of its mission as stipulated in Directive 21 and ordered to carry out intercommand map maneuvers during January for the purpose of detailed examination of proposed action. A number of command post exercises took place at each AG headquarters; ideas formulated on these occasions were debated in detail during OKH staff meetings.<sup>38</sup> Halder briefed Hitler on 3 February on these exercises, and informed Hitler of his conversation with Heinrichs.<sup>39</sup> Halder stated that but one and a half divisions were free to advance on Murmansk, while an equal force was to be moved to central Finland via Sweden and would strike eastwards. The Finnish Army, he continued, would commit four corps in south Finland: five divisions striking towards Leningrad, three towards Lake Onega, and two towards Hanko. All the Finnish advances would require strong, active German aid.<sup>40</sup> Hitler listened impassively and approved the OKH deployment directive, adding that "the world will hold its breath at the launching of Operation Barbarossa."<sup>41</sup> Hitler's restless anxiety about the ability of his generals to conduct Barbarossa with sufficient daring and determination was apparent; on the following day he revealed his intention of following OKH preparations in detail.<sup>42</sup>

On 4 February Hitler discussed the naval aspect of Barbarossa with Raeder. It was tacitly assumed that Finland would allow her harbors and naval craft to be used for the laying of a mine field across the Gulf of Finland and her airfields for raids on the Soviet Baltic fleets and the White Sea Canal.<sup>43</sup> The OKM could commit only two cruisers, six destroyers, three torpedo boats, twenty-three U-boats, four mine-layers and four mine-sweepers, eleven ice-breakers and twenty-five to thirty transports to Finnish coastal waters, both in the Gulf of Finland and the Arctic Ocean.<sup>44</sup>

On 8 February Mannerheim informed Rossing of the development of yet another crisis situation in Soviet-Finnish relations and warned of what Soviet control of Petsamo would mean to the OKH supply system in Finland. The OKW learned on 12 February from Horn that the Soviets were demanding the management of the Petsamo mines and the majority of the ore.<sup>45</sup> On 18 February the Soviet-Finnish negotiations were deadlocked and, for all practical purposes, ended.<sup>46</sup> On 19 February, under pressure from the AA, a ~~nick~~<sup>tie</sup> ~~matte~~ agreement between Germany and Finland was finally signed.<sup>47</sup> On 20 February, Juho Kusti Paasikivi resigned his post as Finnish envoy in the Kremlin; Witting informed von Blucher of this development the next day.<sup>48</sup> The Finns attempted, through the military attaches, to secure direct German military support at this point; but the AA informed the OKW that the negotiations between Finland and the Soviet Union were being followed closely and that there was no danger of the Soviets using force.<sup>49</sup> The OKW accepted their judgement and rebuffed Finnish pleas.

Meanwhile, preparations for the invasion continued apace. In February Jodl and his associates in the OKW prepared propaganda material for the invasion, drafted regulations for the administration of occupied Soviet territory, and coordinated inter-forces functions. On 20 February Goring formed a small OKL staff for Barbarossa planning under his own supervision near Berlin.<sup>50</sup> The Finnish state radio was engaged in a systematic pro-German campaign. Glamorized biographies of German leaders were regularly transmitted for Finnish listeners; Hitler's

Mein Kampf was translated and circulated in large editions; and an official Fascist magazine appeared on Finnish newstands.<sup>51</sup> Radio intercept stations, the only reliable source of intelligence available to the OKH/OKW prior to hostilities, were established in Finland during the month. Because of insufficient personnel and inadequate equipment these stations were unable to reach very deeply into the interior, their range being limited to the territories near the Finnish border. Reports from Abwehr agents in Finland did supply some front line information. Special high-altitude equipment for air reconnaissance was unavailable for the Fifth Luftflotte.<sup>52</sup> In February the OKW inquired of the Finnish authorities on possible improvement of various roads in the far north, particularly the one leading northeast from Ivalo towards the Soviet border. The Finns took the un-subtle hint and began upgrading surface transport routes as soon as weather conditions permitted.<sup>53</sup>

But complications were arising for German strategy in Finland. The Aaland Islands were now listed as a potential objective. On 14 February, Halder noted that the OKH had determined that the Aaland chain must be occupied; and he mentions a possible "conditional German Occupation."<sup>54</sup> To guarantee the flow of supplies to the fronts in Finland this was a logical prerequisite and was soon incorporated into the list of objectives - for the Finnish forces. On 11 February the OKH informed AOK Norwegen that only a portion of its rear area personnel and vehicles requested could be supplied and that SS-Nord was not to be used in the projected operations. Taking these limitations into account, AOK Norwegen was to investigate and report on the possibility of execution of its operations. Buschenhagen replied that the occupation of Petsamo could be carried out at any moment on order; but the destruction of Soviet forces defending Murmansk might not be accomplished. AOK Norwegen proposed to pursue the Silberfuchs study, but, due to the new limitations on support personnel, it would no longer be possible to turn forces south in support of Finnish operations until a base of supply had been created at Kandalaksha.<sup>55</sup> Questions involving OKL strikes at Hanko and the



White Sea Canal, their feasibility and effectiveness, arose.<sup>56</sup>

In February, SS-Brigadefuhrer Gottlob Berger, acting on information supposedly obtained from pro-German Finnish military officers, formally requested that an attempt to recruit a battalion of Finns into the Waffen SS be made. On 13 February Himmler gave his permission to the project.<sup>57</sup> A few days later Berger informed the AA that seven hundred Finns had applied at the DGH for enlistment in the Waffen SS and that the Reichsfuhrer-SS had approved of their enlistment.<sup>58</sup> On 22 February von Ribbentrop informed von Weizsacker of the project, setting the figure at seven hundred fifty.<sup>59</sup> On 1 March Berger announced that the SS intended within the next two days to dispatch an SS medical team to Helsinki to commence physical examinations. Since, as yet, no word of this plan had been mentioned to the Finnish government, the AA requested that Berger delay the mission while it sent Kivimaki to Helsinki to gain the opinion of his superiors. In the meantime, an inquiry to the DGH brought the AA the reply that the number of Finns who had applied was not seven hundred but less than twenty-four, and that they wanted to enlist in the Wehrmacht, not the SS. By this point, Kivimaki had returned with the information that both the civilian and military authorities of his country were "basically friendly" to the recruiting of an all-Finnish unit for service with the German forces and felt that it would revive the "Waffenbruderschaft" which had once linked the two nations.<sup>60</sup> They had no steadfast objection to the Waffen SS so long as the Finnish volunteers were given a status separate from that of collaborator units recruited in occupied nations.<sup>61</sup> A semi-clandestine private committee headed by two pro-German conservative nationalists, P.H. Norrmen and E. Riekki, was formed to handle the recruitment. In two months the agreed upon number of recruits was reached; Witting announced in May 1941 that some one thousand two hundred total had been found acceptable. The unit was to be purely Finnish, to be returned to Finland after its tour of service, and to serve only as a component of the divisions SS-Nordland or SS-Wiking. When the Finnish committee attempted to press for other conditions, notably limitations of

combat use, the SS refused in April to allow any further conditions to be considered. Thus, by April, when the first Finnish volunteers completed their training in Germany, Finnish youths appeared in the uniforms of the Reich.<sup>62</sup>

In late February, Lieutenant General Hans Georg von Seidel, Quartermaster General OKL, visited Helsinki. Von Seidel was ostensibly to inspect the OKL supply route. While there he met socially with Mannerheim, who presented his high-ranking guest with the Grand Cross of the Finnish White Rose.<sup>63</sup> Von Seidel did not discuss questions of an operational nature and generally avoided political comments; in his meetings with Heinrichs and Talvela he discussed logistic affairs, primarily concentrating upon the transit route. He expressed the desire to inspect the air bases and OKL construction sites along the eastern border; then he proceeded north to study the logistics problems for the Rovaniemi area. Tactical and strategic points were not discussed.<sup>64</sup> He departed Finland within a few days.

On 18 February, Colonel Buschenhagen arrived in Helsinki for an extended tour.<sup>65</sup> For two days he was engaged in a series of conferences with officers of the Finnish General Staff; Buschenhagen paid an official call to Mannerheim, and met with Heinrichs, Airo, and Tappola. For the OKW/OKH these conversations were of immense value. Buschenhagen carried out all discussions in a cautious manner and repeatedly emphasized that all deliberations were hypothetical; yet he also stressed that the topics under discussion were to be relayed to a very select group of officers only. Buschenhagen learned, from a remark by Airo, that Finland expected German forces to occupy the Aaland chain. Heinrichs felt that Soviet Russia might offer Finland sections of Karelia to keep Finland neutral during a German-Russian conflict.<sup>66</sup> Buschenhagen noted that "the Finns, with all their deliberations, are concerned with interests which nevertheless are primarily local."<sup>67</sup> Also, Buschenhagen was given to understand that the Finnish Army could and would cover the OKW/OKH concentration of forces prior to B-Tag. Buschenhagen had expressed the desire to inspect certain areas in the north, list-

ing Kajaani, Kuusamo, Rovaniemi, Kemijarvi, the Petsamo region and the Salla region. He wished to study the terrain, possibilities of troop deployment, and Finnish fortifications. With Tappola, and various local commanders, Buschenhagen toured.<sup>68</sup> However, these surveys were superficial for he had little time and the season was adverse.<sup>69</sup> But he did gather precious information for "Blaufuchs", the troop concentration plan.<sup>70</sup> Buschenhagen had, during the trip, mentioned the German interest in neutralizing Murmansk and isolating the Kola region in the event of war.<sup>71</sup> Finnish mobilization was discussed, conditional upon certain events. Finally, on 28 February, Buschenhagen crossed into Norway.<sup>72</sup>

When Buschenhagen returned to Oslo from Finland, planning for Silberfuchs was still incomplete; too many factors remained undetermined. Sweden in response to cautious AA inquiries in February 1941, would allow OKW transit of its territory only in response to a Soviet attack on Finland. On 6 March Goring wrote the Swedish premier, Hansson, stating that "Sweden must soon decide its position in any Russo-German conflict" and pointing out that Finland's attitude was clear.<sup>73</sup> Hansson was unmoved. It was concluded that, for planning purposes, OKW transit of Sweden prior to B-Tag could not be assumed. On 2 March, the OKW emphasized, in a communication with AOK Norwegen, that "all preparations which extend to other states can only commence after authorization from the political leadership."<sup>74</sup> In Finland's case, it was not to be given until May 1941.<sup>75</sup> On 8 March Buschenhagen reported to Hitler that, due to the poor road network in north Finland as compared to that available around Murmansk, any direct German drive on Murmansk held little hope for success.<sup>76</sup> On the same day Hitler decreed that Dietl's forces were to be reinforced by a mobile armored group; then forbid the use of the panzers across open tundra.<sup>77</sup>

One positive step was taken. Halder had recognized the necessity of a liaison staff for coordination of operations with the Finnish General Staff. Halder, on 8 March, noted that a liaison staff "Nord" would have to be organized and functioning prior to B-Tag.<sup>78</sup> Almost immediately, the OKH began personnel stud-



ies to prepare such a staff for transfer north.

On 4 March two British cruisers and five destroyers had appeared off Svolvær in the Lofotens, shelled the town, sank several German ships in the harbor, and sent a raiding party ashore capturing over two hundred German prisoners.<sup>79</sup> Although the raid had no military significance, it aroused in Hitler an overwhelming concern for the security of Norway. On 11 March Hitler ordered von Falkenhorst and Buschenhagen and Boehm, in command of OKM forces in the Arctic north, to Berchtesgaden.<sup>80</sup> At a conference on 12 March Hitler stressed the defensive mission of AOK Norwegen. He ordered additional coastal batteries to Norway to be emplaced by mid-May; existing troop strength was not only not to be reduced by withdrawals for Barbarossa but to be increased in the Kirkenes-Narvik region. As for offensive measures, Petsamo was still to be occupied and defended; but the operation against Murmansk was to be carried through only when sufficient forces were available.<sup>81</sup> The capture of Murmansk had been reduced in scope and its execution made tentative. Buschenhagen noted that only fifty percent of the units in Norway were now free for operations against the Soviet Union. For Silberfuchs, two Geb.Div. would advance in the north and the 169th Division, joined by one Finnish division, would strike east from Salla.<sup>82</sup>

Another consequence of the 4 March Svolvær raid was that von Falkenhorst, who as armed forces commander in Norway was subordinate to OKW but as commanding general AOK Norwegen was tactically subordinate to OKH, was now placed under the command of the OKW in both capacities. However, that left the German army in Norway under the OKW while on Norwegian soil and under the OKH for Barbarossa planning and operations.<sup>83</sup> Von Brauchitsch had long harbored a "smouldering resentment" at the exclusion of the OKH from the Norwegian campaign in April 1940; this was now aggravated by the changes in plans and command ordered by Hitler for AOK Norwegen.<sup>84</sup> On 18 March, von Brauchitsch declared that "he was leaving it to OKW to issue all orders" concerning the advances from Finland.<sup>85</sup> Hitler agreed. On 18 March the OKW assumed responsibility for the direction of Renntier, Platin-

fuchs, Polarfuchs, and all supportive operations.<sup>86</sup> On 21 March, Halder noted dryly that "Group Falkenhorst" would be directed by the OKW.<sup>87</sup>

The subsequent dispersion of military effort in Finland was the result of the complex division of command which placed demands upon the German and Finnish forces from three directions - the Finnish General Staff, the OKH, the OKW. Following von Brauchitsch's declaration, the OKW planned to offer the command of all operations in Finland to Mannerheim; although he might refuse to assume responsibility for attacks conducted by predominately German forces to obtain Hitler's strategic objectives.<sup>88</sup> Eventually he retained command only in the south, where Finnish formations were in the majority.<sup>89</sup> As a result, the German operations in north Finland - Silberfuchs - were controlled by the OKW through AOK Norwegen, the headquarters of which was split into two sections, one in Oslo and the other over one thousand miles away in Finland. However, because the OKW lacked the necessary organizations, the German units handling supply and transit, numbering thirty-six officers and eight hundred thirty-four troops, would remain under OKH/OKL control. Further, the OKH, through the liaison staff it established, advised Mannerheim on operational matters; the OKW had no such comparable liaison with the Finnish Army. Finally, coordination of action between B.Finn., the AOK Norwegen headquarters in Rovaniemi, and the Finnish command in the south, and of each of them with AG Nord under the direction of OKH, was virtually impossible. Added to this problem was Hitler's decision to weaken the eastward thrust in the far north by retaining a majority of troops in Norway for static defense. Further dispersion resulted from the decision to deliver two separate advances, both having barely sufficient forces to attain their objectives, rather than one massive drive.<sup>90</sup> This led to requests for the allotment of Finnish formations to lend support and to carry out secondary operations. These requests and the demands of their own political and strategic aims forced the Finns to divide their army in June between five separate operations - the main advance on the Svir River comprising thirteen divisions, a corps committed to Silberfuchs, a batta-

lion in support of the Gebirgskorps, the forces for the occupation of the Aaland chain, and forces to isolate and contain the Hanko base. (Later, a further operation was launched on the Karelian Isthmus.) Once committed to these operations, the Finnish and German forces were prevented from swift concentration of troops for exploitation of advantages by the sparse road and rail system. It is emphasized that these two decisions, both made in March 1941, had great detrimental impact on military strategy in Finland. Perhaps more than any other factor, these decisions brought about the failure of German operations in the north.

(In reviewing this disastrous division of command, one should note that two viable alternatives existed. One, the most obvious, was to place the German forces under the command of Mannerheim and allow him to have a strong role in the planning of operations in the far north. Although this situation had not occurred before in the present conflict, the precedent of placing German troops under foreign commanders had been established during the course of the First World War. As detailed later, the OKW eventually withdrew from this possibility. The most effective command system would have been to adopt the methods utilized in dealing with the other German allies - notably the Italians, the Rumanians, and the Hungarians - to place them under the AG responsible for that section of the front. Thus the Finnish and AOK Norwegen German forces would have been placed under the command of AG Nord, with which they were to eventually link. In effect this would have placed all forces in Finland under OKH tactical and strategic command. Orders would have been passed to Mannerheim's command and B.Finn. from Zossen. To this would be added coordination of logistics, with Finnish and German troops able to draw from AG Nord stocks. It is uncertain whether this alternative was ever seriously considered by OKH/OKW. It is inexplicable that the Finns were allowed the latitude in military affairs that the other allies were denied.)

The Reich expected great advances in the north. On 17 March Hitler observed that success must be won from the start and that there must be no reverses. Therefore, no operations should include "forces that we cannot count on with cer-



tainty." He then stated that only German and, to a lesser degree, Finnish troops could be relied upon for offensive operations. Halder wrote, "No illusion over allies! Finns will fight valiantly, but are weakened by Winter War."<sup>91</sup> For their valiance, the Finns were to be rewarded with all the Soviet territory to the White Sea.

The 6th and 7th SS Totenkopf-Standarten had been transferred to AOK Norwegen in late 1940. They were reorganized with a signals unit to constitute SS Kampfgruppe Nord. SS-Nord had been placed under the tactical command of von Falkenhorst for use in Silberfuchs; Himmler, however, retained the right to withdraw it for SS tasks at any time.<sup>92</sup> In March 1941 elements of SS-Nord were readied for transport to north Norway, where it was to assemble near Kirkenes. From there it was to proceed south along the Arctic Highway to concentrate near Rovaniemi for its resurrected role in Barbarossa. The SS Kampfgruppe had, in March, been included in the operation because, as the only major motorized force available to AOK Norwegen, it alone was capable of making the long overland march from Kirkenes to Rovaniemi in the allotted time.<sup>93</sup>

In addition to the rising German military interest in Finland, rather explicit assurances of support had finally come from the AA. On 5 March Kivimaki was informed by von Weizsacker that the German position had been "definitely determined" and Finland could face "with complete assurance all surprises ...". Two days later, Kivimaki learned from the AA that a turn of events "very advantageous for Finland" had occurred.<sup>94</sup> In response, on 2 April, Witting expressed his attitude to von Blucher, saying that "as a small country, Finland could at present pursue no policy of her own choice, but had to adapt herself to circumstances."<sup>95</sup> While German-Finnish relations were warming, German-Soviet relations were cooling. On 27 March, Ribbentrop had informed Yosuke Matsuoka, Japan's minister in Berlin, that diplomacy with the Soviet Union was "correct but deteriorating. If Russia makes a false move she will be crushed." He later told Matsuoka that German resistance to the Soviet Union with respect to Finland was based on economics and

sentiment; Germany could never allow Finland to fall to Soviet Russia.<sup>96</sup> Conversely, as German-Soviet relations collapsed, Soviet-Finnish tension eased. In conversations with Ryti, Rangell, and Witting in April, von Blucher learned of various signs of relaxation which had become evident in Finnish-Soviet relations. They pointed to the recent absence of Soviet pressure in the Petsamo question, the absence of anti-Finnish broadcasts, and the obliging attitude of the Soviet Helsinki legation.<sup>97</sup> On 5 April, Zotov, whom the Finnish authorities had found extremely difficult, was replaced by T. Orlov, a cultured and friendly man, sympathetic to Finland's position. On 25 April Tippleskirch reported from Moscow, "It was noticed here too, that relations between Finland and the Soviet Union have recently become more serene."<sup>98</sup> Ironically, on 20 April, Hitler summoned Ribbentrop to Vienna and informed him of the decision to attack Soviet Russia. Hitler cautioned that no demarche was to be sought by the AA; no diplomacy would make him change his mind about Russia's attitude, which was quite clear to him, and it might well deprive him of the weapon of tactical surprise.<sup>99</sup>

Due to the severe revisions in objectives and chain of command for AOK Norwegen, its planning for Barbarossa had come to a virtual halt during March 1941. On 7 April an OKW directive implementing the revised "Aufmarschanweisung" provided a basis for the resumption of planning.<sup>100</sup> It was entitled "Weisung an den Wehrmachtbefehlshaber Norwegen uber seine Aufgaben im Fall Barbarossa."<sup>101</sup> The reinforced 2nd Geb.Div. was to be held ready for the occupation of Petsamo, but with a proviso that the forces defending the Narvik-Kirkenes region not be reduced below eighteen battalions. Whether enough strength could then be mustered for a thrust to Murmansk and Polarnyy depended on a number of unforeseen conditions, but the necessary preparations were to be made and as many troops as possible assembled. The operation further south, codenamed Polarfuchs, would have Kandalaksha as its first objective; further development would depend on the situation. For the concentration of forces the Swedish transit would presumably not be available.<sup>102</sup> SS-Nord was to travel south along the Arctic Highway to Rovani-

emi. The headquarters for the newly constituted XXXVI Corps and an infantry division were to travel north to Rovaniemi. Since the troops would be in movement a week prior to B-Tag, the shift was to be disguised as an exchange of units for the relief of the Kirkenes garrison.<sup>103</sup>

Movements began immediately. Operation "Fischzug", the concentration of SS-Nord in Kirkenes, had already begun. "Wallfahrt", the shift of the 199th Division from south Norway to Troms was to take place between 25 April and 3 June. "Herkules" was to shift the 3rd Geb.Div. to east Finnmark between 30 April and 21 June. And "Siegfried" was the concentration of the 2nd Geb.Div. south of Kirkenes.<sup>104</sup> In April the 48th Panzer Jager Abt. was added to Herkules and MG-Battalion 4 was ordered sent to Rovaniemi as reinforcements in June.<sup>105</sup>

By the operation orders, issued on 20 April by AOK Norwegen, Gr. XXXVI was to execute the main German strike, Polarfuchs, at Kandalaksha. Gr. XXXVI was now to consist of the 169th Division, SS Kampfgruppe Nord, the Finnish 6th Division (detached from III Corps), two battalions of panzers, a bridge construction battalion, two construction battalions, two motorized artillery battalions, a heavy weapons battalion, a communications battalion, two batteries of OKL artillery, and a Nebelwerfer battery. After assembly, on B-Tag XXXVI Corps was to advance units along the Rovaniemi-Kandalaksha road, seizing the Salla salient and occupying Kandalaksha, cutting the Murmansk railway.<sup>106</sup> Due to uncertainty concerning the extent of Finnish preparation, the April order to Gr. XXXVI was tentative. AOK Norwegen proposed a secondary attack, probably by the Finnish 6th Division, from Kuusamo via Kestenga to Loukhi and a combat reconnaissance via Ukhta towards Kem. The commanding general of the XXXVI Gen.Kdo. General Hans Feige, suggested employing his forces in a northward strike behind Salla at Kayrala to deny the Soviet forces a defense in depth; but the terrain and road network were unfavorable for such an envelopment tactic.<sup>107</sup> His forces were to drive directly on Kandalaksha as ordered. Meanwhile, a large headquarters camp for XXXVI Gen.Kdo. was begun near Rovaniemi.<sup>108</sup>



On 18 April, Dietl received his orders from AOK Norwegen. Dietl was critical of these OKW plans, especially of the advance on Murmansk and Polarnyy, code-named "Platinfuchs", to follow Renntier. In Berlin in late April he reported that five regiments stood ready, but, due to terrain and natural defensive positions and strong Soviet forces, they were not sufficient. Dietl requested more mechanized vehicles and panzers.<sup>109</sup> He was made "Befehlshaber im Polarbereich" by the OKW and given instead the 199th Division, a machine gun battalion, a police battalion, and numerous assorted artillery batteries.<sup>110</sup>

There was no plan for initiation of the Finns until 28 April, when Warlimont of OKW drafted one for submission to Hitler. Warlimont proposed that "military conferences must be preceded by political contacts." There should be two major military conferences between Finnish and German staff officers. During the first, to be held in Germany, Jodl was to reveal "the mission with which the Finns will be charged." After the Finns had had a few days to study the information, a second conference "to clarify any possible dubious problems" would be held. In both conferences, German intentions would be camouflaged by "a) the overall plan not being mentioned at all and b) the intentions from the Finnish area being represented as possible necessary offensive-defensive measures."<sup>111</sup> On the day he postponed B-Tag until 22 June, 30 April, Hitler approved Warlimont's proposal. The formula to be utilized in all contact with the Finns was, "Major developments possible in the west. Hence protection in the east necessary. Russia has occasionally treated us in an unfriendly fashion, so we had better prepare ourselves for surprises."<sup>112</sup> This fiction was to be observed faithfully by AA and military officials involved in contact with their Finnish counterparts right until B-Tag.

On 6 May, AOK Norwegen issued "Befehl fur das Unternehmen Silberfuchs."<sup>113</sup> It was followed in a few days by "Anlage R",<sup>114</sup> giving tactical assignments for Renntier, and "Anlage P",<sup>115</sup> detailing the Polarfuchs operation. Together these three documents represent the core of German military strategy in Finland. On 22 June 1941 at 2:30 a.m. local time, the Gebirgskorps and support troops were to

enter Finland.<sup>116</sup> The 3rd Geb.Div., the south flank of the advance, was to cross the border near Kasiba, occupy Kolosjoki and take up defensive positions. The 2nd Geb.Div. on 22 June was to occupy Parkinna and Liinahamari, seizing the Soviet consulate and the docks; on the following day it was to occupy the north coastal areas.<sup>117</sup> It was assumed that the Finnish battalion "Ivalo" would provide support.<sup>118</sup> German troops committed to Renntier numbered thirty-five thousand, supported by two thousand five hundred labor troops.<sup>119</sup> It was estimated that the occupation would be completed within four days. Upon receipt of the prearranged command, Platinfuchs was to be initiated.<sup>120</sup> Elements of the 2nd Geb.Div. were to strike to isolate the Fisherman's Peninsula and drive on Titovka. To oppose any advance on Murmansk, German intelligence estimated the Red Army had placed a full corps in the Kola region, the 104th Division based at Murmansk, the 52nd Division at Motovsk, and the 14th Division in the Olenja-Balino area.<sup>121</sup> For Polarfuchs, the OKW had allotted forty thousand six hundred troops, with the 163rd Division numbering fifteen thousand men in reserve.<sup>122</sup> Movement of German units from the north to Rovaniemi, Blaufuchs I, was to commence eight days prior to B-Tag.<sup>123</sup> Blaufuchs II, the move of Gen.Kdo. XXXVI and certain units under its command northward along the transit route, was to be complete by 15 June. SS-Nord was to arrive in position on 19 June.<sup>124</sup> The initial objective for Polarfuchs was the Salla heights, just inside Soviet territory. Opposing this operation would be the 88th Division based at Kandalaksha, the 122nd Division at Kuolajarvi, and the 54th Division at Kjem.

The OKL was prepared to commit three fighter squadrons, two bomber squadrons, a Stuka flight, and a long-range bomber squadron to the offensives.<sup>125</sup> The possibility existed that the 14th Luftwaffe Division might be transferred to Gen. Kdo. XXXVI.<sup>126</sup> The request of Gen.Kdo. XXXVI for Stuka strikes at Salla and Kandalaksha on B-Tag was under study. But it was felt that, initially, OKL strikes must be concentrated on Soviet airfields - Murmansk, Kandalaksha, ~~Ukhta~~ <sup>Shuyoresk</sup> Pajarvi, Hyskyjarvi, and ~~Schuyoresk~~ <sup>Schuyoresk</sup> - to gain immediate air superiority.<sup>127</sup> The OKL

would be able to stage from certain Finnish fields - Oulu, Kemi, Rovaniemi, and Kemijarvi - to increase operational time.<sup>128</sup> Some five hundred OKL flak troops were to man air defenses in Finland.<sup>129</sup>

Preparations continued. On 8 May, sea and land transport for Blaufuchs I and Blaufuchs II was ordered readied.<sup>130</sup> On 16 May, requests for the preparation of specified roads and bridges for the Polarfuchs advance was made of the Finnish High Command and German labor troops offered for this.<sup>131</sup> Also on 16 May, the position of "Admiral Polarkuste" was created to coordinate naval operations along the Norwegian and Finnish and Soviet Arctic coastline.<sup>132</sup> On 17 May, the movement plans for SS-Nord were finalized and issued.<sup>133</sup> All of this activity was highly visible. Von Blucher, unaware of the Barbarossa planning, noted the increased tempo of German military activity. "German military transports arrived in increasing numbers. Lines of communication across Finland were established, food and munition depots were established, roads and bridges in the west-east direction were improved."<sup>134</sup>

On 12 May, Jodl informed Ritter of the AA that "it is now becoming urgent to enter into detailed discussions with Finland concerning military cooperation, particularly about further troop transports to Finland, a joint plan of operations, High Command, etc ... The military discussions should take place on the assumption of a possible conflict originating with the Soviet Union. For this purpose, the OKW would like to invite two Finnish General Staff officers to Germany as soon as possible."<sup>135</sup> The OKW sought advice on whether the invitation should be tendered through military channels or through the AA. Jodl even suggested that Schnurre be sent, "because of his close personal relations with the Finnish Minister President and the Finnish Foreign Minister."<sup>136</sup> The Wilhelmstrasse agreed.

Schnurre, officially in Helsinki for trade negotiations, met with Ryti on 20 May.<sup>137</sup> After the initial exchange of greetings, Schnurre proceeded to a review of the Molotov November visit, suitably biased. Schnurre explained that German-



Soviet relations had been deteriorating recently and that each side had therefore taken "certain security measures of a military nature."<sup>138</sup> It was not Hitler's intention to precipitate a war, but the possibility of an armed conflict existed. Germany would soon force either a diplomatic or a military solution to this uneasy state of affairs. Thus, the Reich required from Finland two things, a list of points that Finland desired clarified for negotiations between Germany and the Soviet Union and a visit by one or more staff officers of the Finnish Army to Germany "to discuss how military measures should be coordinated" in the event of a war.<sup>139</sup> Ryti, after consultation with other Finnish authorities - Mannerheim, Rangell, Walden, and Witting - during a dinner, replied in the affirmative to both requests. It was arranged that the "Finnish guests" would arrive in Germany by special plane on 24 May.<sup>140</sup> Schnurre signalled success to Ribbentrop on 22 May.<sup>141</sup>

In preparation for the arrival of the Finnish delegation, a protocol for discussion was issued by the OKW on 22 May. The Finnish representatives were to be informed, in a limited way of the overall German operational plans, specifically the seizure of the Baltic States and Leningrad by AG Nord, the operation of the Luftwaffe from Finnish bases against Soviet targets, and the Silberfuchs plan. The German requests to be made of Finland at this initial conference included the transit of Gen.Kdo. XXXVI and an infantry division by rail north to Rovaniemi, an early camouflaged mobilization of the Finnish armed forces, Finnish participation in Polarfuchs, and a Finnish advance to the Svir River.<sup>142</sup> Copies of this document were passed to the OKH, OKL, OKM, and possibly the AA.

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Footnotes---

1. AA DGFP, vol.XII, p.434.
2. Blucher, op.cit., pp.200-201.
3. Jalanti, op.cit., pp.312-313. On 2 June Veltjens informed Walden that the

material would arrive by 17 June via Baltic shipping. But due to the threat of war, of which Veltjens was unaware, Tera presented new requests to Veltjens: some five hundred thousand rounds of various calibre for these weapons as a reserve and an earlier shipping date. Veltjens agreed to supply the munitions - on credit. The cargos arrived in Finnish ports on 13 June and 20 June.

4. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.209.
5. For Rossing's entire report, see T-312/1010/9206136-39. "Finnland-Kampffuhrungsabsichten des finnischen Generalstabes in Petsamogebiet."
6. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.245.
7. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, pp.209-210.
8. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.245.
9. T-312/1011/9205841. "Ubersicht uber die Decknamen fur die Operationen aus Norwegen und Finnland auf Murmansk."
10. Krosby, op.cit., p.117.
11. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.247.
12. AA DGFP, vol.XI, pp.1137-1138.
13. Krosby, op.cit., p.117.
14. AA DGFP, vol.XI, p.1139.
15. Ibid, vol.XI, pp.1199-1200.
16. T-312/1010/9206092. "Studie uber Operationsabsicht Silberfuchs."
17. Ziemke, op.cit., pp.124-125.
18. Thomas W. Kistle, op.cit., p.104.
19. Jalanti, op.cit., p.234.
20. Waldemar Erfurth, Der Finnische Krieg 1941-1944 (Wiesbaden: limes Verlag, 1950), p.27.
21. Jalanti, op.cit., p.235.
22. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, pp.207-208.
23. AA DGFP, vol.XI, p.1231.
24. Greiner, op.cit., p.357.
25. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.264.
26. Greiner, op.cit., p.357.
27. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.208.
28. The OKW KTB notes the Heinrichs-Halder conference tersely, "Reserve about

German views with regard to participation in any eastern expedition. Refusal of any Finnish cooperation in an attack on Leningrad." OKW KTB, vol.I, p.1191.

29. Again, as with the Talvela visit in December 1940, this may be - indeed, probably is - no more than coincidence. Heinrichs, states Erforth, returned to Helsinki in February without hearing of German deliberations of war with the Soviet Union. However, this seems quite incredible; according to both Greiner and Halder, Heinrichs was very aware of the Barbarossa planning, while not intimate with its details.

30. For the full draft of "Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa", see T-312/1010/9205566-85.

31. Leach, op.cit., p.269.

32. T-312/1010/9205577. "Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa."

33. For the full text, see Leach, op.cit., pp.267-269.

34. T-312/1010/9205579. "Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa."

35. T-312/1010/9205584. "Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa."

36. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.210.

37. Halder KTB, vol.II, pp.264-265.

38. Blau, op.cit., p.26.

39. Greiner, op.cit., p.357.

40. Blau, op.cit., pp.29-30.

41. Ibid, p.32.

42. Leach, op.cit., pp.160-161.

43. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, pp.210-211.

44. See T-312/1011/9206568-70. "Feindnachrichtenblatt Russland."

45. OKW KTB, vol.I, p.325.

46. Krosby, op.cit., p.143.

47. Ibid, p.138.

48. Ibid, p.145. Paasikivi was recalled in early March and only returned briefly to Moscow, even though his appointment was not officially terminated until the end of May.

49. Ziemke, op.cit., p.119.

50. Blau, op.cit., p.33.

51. Meiksins, op.cit., p.188.

52. Blau, op.cit., pp.41-42.



53. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.214.
54. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.281.
55. Ziemke, op.cit., pp.126-127.
56. OKW KTB, vol.I, p.317.
57. George H. Stein, The Waffen SS, Hitler's Elite Guard at War 1939-1945 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), p.149.
58. Ziemke, op.cit., p.119.
59. Jalanti, op.cit., p.260.
60. Ziemke, op.cit., pp.119-120. According to Upton, Witting reacted favorably and the others consulted, Ryti and Walden and Mannerheim, agreed but would have preferred a regular Wehrmacht unit in the tradition of the 27th Jager Regiment of World War I. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, pp.230-231.
61. Ziemke, op.cit., p.120.
62. The battalion formed part of the SS Panzer-Grenadier Division Wiking on the eastern front until disbanded and its members absorbed by the Finnish Army.
63. AA DGFP, vol.XII, p.123.
64. Jalanti, op.cit., pp.251-252.
65. International Military Tribunal, Trial of the Major War Criminals (Nuremberg: International Military Tribunal, 1947), vol.VII, p.310. (Hereafter cited IMT.)
66. AA DGFP, vol.XII, p.126.
67. Ibid, vol. XII, p.124.
68. Jalanti, op.cit., pp.256-257.
69. Erfurth, op.cit., p.28.
70. Jalanti, op.cit., p.258.
71. Ibid, p.255.
72. When two such ranking officers as the quartermaster-general OKL and the chief of staff AOK Norwegen arrived in February and displayed an interest in northern Finland, their hosts were bound to draw certain tentative conclusions. That the visits were concerned with more than merely the official pretext, "the supply organization of the German transit," was quite obvious. When Buschenhagen toured north Finland, the Finnish officers that accompanied him could hardly but have had distinct impressions of the German strategy then developing. At least Buschenhagen himself found it difficult to believe that his Finnish escort Tappola should not "have formed his own ideas about it," even though Buschenhagen made no explicit revelations about OKW intentions. Krosby, op.cit., pp.157-158.
73. Lundin, op.cit., p.108.

74. T-312/1010/9206024. "AOK Norwegen - Betr. Silberfuchs."
75. Without doubt, the delay, followed by the hurried conferences of late May and early June, handicapped AOK Norwegen's staff. Perhaps, with the weeks of joint planning that were lost, more factors in Silberfuchs could have been foreseen and appropriate steps taken, more supply facilities could have been stockpiled, and more comprehensive command delininations could have been made.
76. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.218.
77. OKW KTB, vol.I, p.349; Warlimont, op.cit., p.146.
78. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.305.
79. Ziemke, op.cit., pp.127-128.
80. OKW KTB, vol.I, p.352.
81. Ziemke, op.cit., p.128.
82. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.318; Greiner, op.cit., pp.267-368.
83. Ziemke, op.cit., p.128.
84. Leach, op.cit., p.185.
85. Warlimont, op.cit., p.142.
86. OKW KTB, vol.I, pp.362-363.
87. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.325.
88. Warlimont, op.cit., p.142.
89. Leach, op.cit., p.162.
90. Halder was later to express regret that valuable forces had been committed to the drive on Kandalaksha and the severing of the Murmansk railway. "It is a pity the forces could not be better employed." Halder KTB, vol.II, p.441.
91. Ibid, vol.II, pp.336-337.
92. Roger Bender and Hugh Page Taylor, Uniforms, Organization and History of the Waffen-SS (Mountain View: R. James Bender Publishing, 1971), p.148.
93. Ziemke, op.cit., pp.128-129.
94. Krosby, op.cit., pp.149-150.
95. AA DGFP, vol.XII, p.433; Blucher, op.cit., p.128.
96. Erfurth, op.cit., p.24.
97. Krosby, op.cit., p.162.
98. AA DGFP, vol.XII, p.635.
99. Whaley, op.cit., p.17.

100. Ziemke, op.cit., p.129.
101. For text see OKW KTB, vol.I, pp.1011-1013.
102. Ziemke, op.cit., p.129.
103. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.220.
104. Hess, op.cit., pp.29-30.
105. Ibid, p.31.
106. Ziemke, op.cit., p.130.
107. Ibid, pp.130-131.
108. Blucher, op.cit., p.221.
109. Hess, op.cit., pp.28-29.
110. Dietl and Herrmann, op.cit., p.216.
111. IMT, vol.X, pp.982-984.
112. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.387.
113. For the full text, see T-312/1011/9206579-84. "Befehl fur das Unternehmen Silberfuchs."
114. T-312/1011/9206585-92. "Befehl zur Besetzung des Petsamogebietes in Finnisch-Lappland."
115. T-312/1011/9206599-601. Anlage 3 zu Befehl Polarfuchs."
116. Hess, op.cit., p.32.
117. T-312/1011/9206571-76. "Auszug aus einem Bericht der 2.Geb.Div. uber eine an der russisch-finnischen Grenze durchgefuehrten Erkundung." A map of the initial OKW strikes all along the Soviet-Finnish border may be located on T-312/1011/9206524.
118. T-312/1011/9206550. "Bericht uber das Ergebnis der am 17.u.18.4. beim Korpsstab stattgefundenen Planbesprechung."
119. T-312/1011/9206547. "Renntier u. Platinfuchs Zusammenstellung."
120. Dietl and Herrmann, op.cit., p.221.
121. T-312/1011/9206568-70. "Feindnachrichtenblatt Russland."
122. T-312/1011/9206548. "Silberfuchs Zusammenstellung."
123. T-312/1011/9206503. "Fernschreiben, An Saturn Auszug aus vorlaufigem Zeitplan Silberfuchs."
124. T-312/1011/9205755. "Armeeoberkommando Norwegen - SS-Kampfgruppe Nord."
125. T-312/1011/9206558. "Bericht uber das Ergebnis der am 17.u.18.4. beim



Korpsstab stattgefundenen Planbesprechung."

126. T-312/1011/9206569. "Feindnachrichtenblatt Russland."
127. T-312/1011/9206116. "Anlage 3, Transportwege für den Nachschub."
128. T-312/1011/9206116-17. "Anlage 3, Transportwege für den Nachschub."
129. T-312/1011/9206548. "Silberfuchs Zusammenstellung."
130. T-312/1011/9205678. "Inhaltverzeichnis Silberfuchs."
131. T-312/1011/9205700. "Strassen für Bereitstellung und Unterbringung."; and T-312/1011/9205710. "Transportbewegung Blaufuchs I im Unternehmen Silberfuchs."
132. T-312/1011/9205522. "Tätigkeitsbericht Monat-Mai."
133. T-312/1011/9206498. "Regimentsbefehl Nr.1 für die Versammlung."
134. Blucher, op.cit., p.221.
135. AA DGFP, vol.XII, p.787.
136. Ibid, vol.XII, p.787.
137. OKW KTB, vol.I, p.1208; Mannerheim, op.cit., pp.406-407.
138. Krosby, op.cit., p.171.
139. Jalanti, op.cit., p.279.
140. Krosby, op.cit., p.171.
141. Jalanti, op.cit., p.280.
142. Lundin, op.cit., pp.99-100.

Fourth Phase: May 1941 - June 1941

"An alliance with the powerful is never to be trusted." - Phaedrus.<sup>1</sup>

"Force, and fraud, are in war the two cardinal virtues." - Thomas Hobbs.<sup>2</sup>

On 24 May the Finnish delegation deplaned to be met by Buschenhagen.<sup>3</sup> The delegation was headed by Heinrichs and consisted of Colonel Kustaa A. Tappola of operations, Colonel Einar N. Makinen of mobilization, Colonel Harald V. Roos of logistics, and Commodore Sundman for the Finnish naval staff.<sup>4</sup> The next day, 25 May 1941, they met at Salzburg with OKW representatives - Field Marshal Keitel, General Jodl, Lieutenant General von Lossberg, Captain Leopold Burkner of Ab.Ausl. OKW, Lieutenant Colonel Munch representing the AL, and Colonel Buschenhagen for AOK Norwegen.<sup>5</sup> Keitel opened the conference by conveying Hitler's greetings and extending his personal regrets that the political situation had not allowed the Reich to support Finland actively in the Winter War.<sup>6</sup> Major developments in the east were momentarily expected and all eventualities were being considered, some of which demanded meticulous preparations. Thus, this conference of military representatives of the two states. The difficulties which had prompted the briefing were "not acute" and no decisions were to be taken, "but it is our custom to prepare everything thoroughly and in good time in order to be able to act quickly when the hour strikes."<sup>7</sup> After these remarks, Keitel turned the meeting over to Jodl and withdrew.

General Jodl prefaced his delivery with remarks on the general military/political situation. The Reich, he stated, maintained close commercial relations with the USSR; but recently, an unwarranted concentration of the Red Army was occurring along the common frontier.<sup>8</sup> During the winter and spring of 1941, the Soviet garrison in their western territories had increased to a total of one hundred eighteen infantry divisions, twenty cavalry divisions, five armored divi-

sions and twenty-five armored brigades.<sup>9</sup> The Reich had been compelled to assemble her own forces along the border as a countermeasure. A political clarification was hoped for in a short period; but should this fail to materialize, a settlement by military measures would be necessary.<sup>10</sup> Finland would be affected in either case. With a clash possible by early summer, the present discussion was to provide the basis for Finnish-German cooperation. The Finnish officers would be informed of German desires in Finland, the execution of which was to be left for political decision by the Finnish government. With the participation of many small states and the superiority of the Wehrmacht, the Soviet Union would soon be unable to continue the conflict.<sup>11</sup> The war would rapidly develop into a crusade to destroy the Soviet empire.<sup>12</sup> The collapse, predicted Jodl, would occur most quickly in the north and the Baltic would soon be free of Soviet influence.<sup>13</sup> Jodl then outlined, in brief, the projected offensive of AG Nord through the Baltic States, supported by OKM and OKL operations against the Soviet Baltic fleets. The intended chain of command in Finland was explained; in north and central Finland, command would be by OKW through von Falkenhorst with participating Finnish troops under his direction and on the Ladoga front, command by Mannerheim in consultation with OKH with participating German forces under his command.<sup>14</sup> A German liaison officer from the OKH would be placed at the Finnish headquarters.<sup>15</sup> Jodl then explained Renntier and Platinfuchs; German forces would occupy Petsamo and two divisions would strike in the direction of Murmansk and Polarnyy. The OKW wished Finland to mobilize forces around Petsamo, support the defense of Petsamo, and provide scouts and reconnaissance units for Platinfuchs.<sup>16</sup> In the central Finnish theater, German forces would strike at Kandalaksha via Salla. Two divisions, camouflaged as transit troops, would spearhead the assault. The OKW desired participation in this offensive by the Finnish III Corps or, as a minimum commitment, by a single Finnish division as far as the pre-1940 border.<sup>17</sup> "In conjunction with the operations conducted by the OKH with the Army Group North against Leningrad the mission of the Finns will be to immobilize Russian forces



in the area of Ladoga. No demand is made for mounting a high-casualty assault to achieve a breakthrough inasmuch as the Russian front there will collapse automatically as the attack by Army Group North progresses."<sup>18</sup> No more was expected of the main Finnish forces than to engage as many Soviet units as possible until the fall of Leningrad.<sup>19</sup> "Of Finland, we hope only that it actively ties down Soviet units found on its borders at the outbreak of war."<sup>20</sup> The subject of Hanko was now considered; the OKW felt that it was imperative that the Soviet base be eliminated. The Reich wanted Finnish forces to isolate Hanko and later, with OKL support, reduce the fortress.<sup>21</sup> Jodl then requested the Finnish opinion on the Aaland Islands; Heinrichs proposed occupation of four or five of the major islands by German or Finnish troops. Jodl stated that a decision would be obtained from Hitler as to whether the Aaland chain would be occupied by German forces or not.<sup>22</sup> Passing to the other services, Jodl informed Heinrichs that OKL operations over the northern area necessitated the use of the airfields at Helsinki and Kemi. In addition, the Finnish military was expected to provide antiaircraft protection for debarking troops, the Rovaniemi area, and the Kemijarvi region.<sup>23</sup> To coordinate naval activities, Jodl proposed a OKM-Finnish Navy conference in Berlin to consider the defense of Finnish coastal waters, joint mining operations, and accommodation of Finnish cargo tonnage.<sup>24</sup> Finally, Jodl stated that the Finnish mobilization date should be flexible, dependent on the situation and the Soviet attitude in contemplated diplomatic negotiations. For the Reich, troop movement would commence 5 June, with the first troops arriving in Finland on 8 June and the armor between 10 June and 15 June.<sup>25</sup> Jodl then invited comments and questions from Heinrichs on the German plans.

During Jodl's speech Heinrichs interrupted only twice to comment. First, in relation to the Renntier-Platinfuchs operation, it would be possible to detach a Finnish battalion for service with the Gebirgskorps. Secondly, he informed Jodl that the Finnish Army would prefer to retain control of the III Corps for other operations.<sup>26</sup> Heinrichs opened his response with the statement that "the delega-

tion had listened to the review with interest but that it had no authority to discuss political or military matters."<sup>27</sup> He agreed to transmit all German requests to Mannerheim;<sup>28</sup> meanwhile, he could air his views. Heinrichs first stated that he envisioned the main Finnish effort to be on the southeast front, and proposed that Polarfuchs be a purely German operation. Jodl repeated the German desire for the support of at least one Finnish division, which could be released after the initial strike.<sup>29</sup> Along the ~~Lagoda~~ <sup>Ladoga</sup> front, Heinrichs said, "the Finnish forces will not limit themselves to waiting tactics but will attack as far as is possible."<sup>30</sup> Heinrichs next expressed his view that an isolation of the Hanko base would engage two or three Finnish divisions; therefore he proposed that Hanko be assaulted by German forces with Finnish participation under German command. The OKW felt that to bring up the necessary German assault troops would be possible only through Sweden, and currently such transit was not anticipated.<sup>31</sup> In relation to OKL operations, the Finnish delegation believed that the civil airport at Helsinki could not be relinquished to military use and that the Finnish antiaircraft system would require arms and munitions to fulfill its specified function.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, Finland was facing shortages of food, munitions, motor and aviation fuel.<sup>33</sup> Heinrichs proceeded to the topic of Finnish mobilization, declaring that nine days would be needed for full mobilization. To conceal the mobilization somewhat, the eight western divisions would be mobilized first, followed by the eight eastern divisions.<sup>34</sup>

The entire discussion had remained hypothetical, at least in form. It was agreed that further discussions were necessary with the representatives of the OKL, OKM, OKH, AOK Norwegen, and OKW Transport Office, on the hypothetical offensive.<sup>35</sup> In closing, Heinrichs remarked that "the presence of the Finnish representatives indicates the Finnish attitude, even though the political authorization does not exist."<sup>36</sup> The OKW was satisfied.

Buschenhagen escorted the Finnish officers to Berlin, where first they met with representatives of WiRu.<sup>37</sup> On 26 May, Halder welcomed the Finnish General

Staff representatives at a luncheon, followed by a joint staff meeting.<sup>38</sup> Halder had a transcript of the Salzburg discussion, so he was aware that Heinrichs would make no commitments;<sup>39</sup> and Heinrichs repeatedly pointed out that he had no authority for any agreements.<sup>40</sup> Halder wished to explore the prospects of Finnish support in obtaining the objectives of AG Nord. He opened with general allusions to the planned advance of AG Nord.<sup>41</sup> When Halder mentioned possible Finnish moves at Leningrad, Heinrichs declared that he could not discuss this matter.<sup>42</sup> Halder, pressing on, stated that the OKH hoped the Finnish Army could at least prepare for an offensive either east or west of Lake Ladoga. Such an offensive would eventually link with German forces, and the Baltic would be cleared of Soviet influence. Heinrichs estimated that some six divisions might be committed east of Ladoga; more he could not say. Halder estimated that the Finnish Army need not advance until fourteen days after B-Tag. Therefore Halder felt that Finland should not mobilize, except for select forces, until after the outbreak of hostilities. The Finns however, pointed out that troops would be mobilized to cover the frontiers and German concentration; yet Heinrichs also stated that general mobilization, due to the limited rail facilities, could not begin until the Blaufuchs operation was complete.<sup>43</sup> Halder emphasized that the Finnish forces must assume responsibility for Hanko and the Aaland Islands.<sup>44</sup> The Finnish delegation declared that certain materials were in short supply, materials necessary for any major offensive - antiaircraft weapons, one hundred to two hundred aircraft, tanks, trucks, and radio equipment.<sup>45</sup> Halder could make no offers. The meeting was over. Heinrichs declared again that political consent must be obtained prior to any military agreements. All specific details - such as direction of attack and mobilization timetable - were consequently left undecided. A visit to Helsinki was therefore arranged for one or more German officers in early June. At this time, the Finnish government would, after consideration of Heinrichs' reports on these May meetings, make its commitment, if it so chose.<sup>46</sup>

Meetings with the OKL and the OKM followed. Both sides obtained useful



technical and tactical information, without any firm commitments being offered by either. While preparing for departure on 28 May, Heinrichs requested Captain Burkner's views on two points which were troubling him. One, how was Finland's response to the meetings to be transmitted to Berlin, whether by diplomatic or military channels. Two, which view of Finnish activities on the southeast front, Jodl's request for an engaging of Soviet forces or Halder's for a full Finnish offensive, was to be accepted as authoritative.<sup>47</sup> Burkner responded that diplomatic channels were to be utilized in transmitting the "political consent", and that the OKW request was the minimum expected by the Reich and that Jodl would not, of course, oppose any vigorous Finnish activity in the ~~Ladoga~~ <sup>Ladoga</sup> region. In any case, discussion on the latter topic could be continued in Helsinki in June.<sup>48</sup> Buschenhagen reported to AOK Norwegen, on 28 May, that the results of the joint staff conferences were "not yet satisfactory, since the political authorization was lacking."<sup>49</sup> He hoped to be informed of the Finnish decision in Helsinki on 3 June. Keitel ordered, the same day, that "any further discussions with the Finns not go beyond the limits set by the discussions at Salzburg on May 25."<sup>50</sup> Until the political decision was made, military development was suspended. And Hitler directed that the officers to be sent to Finland were to be kept to a minimum, and their motives for the visits to Finnish authorities were to be camouflaged.<sup>51</sup>

Meanwhile, difficulties in the details of Silberfuchs had arisen. In the course of preparations for the May conferences, it became obvious that the dates for Polarfuchs were not realistic; the operation would have to be initiated later than the main Barbarossa strikes. Buschenhagen reported this unpleasant fact to OKW/OKH on 14 May; Halder's reaction was that the whole offensive plan for the far north was rendered of dubious value.<sup>52</sup> But the OKW was not to be put off; Polarfuchs would proceed, even though delayed. SS-Nord was experiencing difficulties. The Kampfgruppe was essentially a police formation and had only recently begun military training. Its officers of all ranks had no more military training than they had been able to absorb during a short course of lectures and de-

monstrations given them during the previous winter. The unit had fired its artillery only once, and proficiency in the use of small arms was so low that provision had to be made for target practice while the unit moved north. The march to Kirkenes had been so poorly executed and revealed such a profound ignorance of basic military procedure that it resulted in the replacement of the commanding officer, SS-Brigadefuhrer Richard Herrman by SS-Brigadefuhrer Karl Demelhuber on 25 May.<sup>53</sup> And yet this was the only mobile force available to AOK Norwegen.

On 31 May, Kivimaki, in response to Schnurre's request of Ryti, presented a list of Finnish claims to the AA to be used in negotiations between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Finland desired a guarantee of her independence and wished the restoration of her boundaries of 1939. Finland would permit Soviet Russia to retain Karelian Isthmus areas felt vital for Leningrad's defense, if in exchange Soviet areas in east Karelia were ceded to Finland. Finally, the Soviets were to send relief supplies to Finland and surrender twenty trawlers in the Arctic waters as a sign of good faith.<sup>54</sup> On 2 June Kivimaki stated that, if the Soviets in negotiations refused to restore the lost Finnish territories, at least the counter claims to control of the key Vallinkoski hydroelectric plant should be settled in Finland's favor. On 6 June his government suggested that he limit himself to demanding the return of lost territories.<sup>55</sup> The AA kept the Finnish envoy, and hence Witting, under the impression that Russo-German negotiations would progress in normal fashion. The diplomats continued to function in a vacuum.

On 2 June Colonel Buschenhagen and Colonel Eberhard Kinzel of the OKH arrived in Helsinki.<sup>56</sup> Prior to any conversations, Buschenhagen was presented with a memo drafted by Heinrichs in close consultation with Mannerheim. It stated that "the measures previously recommended" could be initiated when "the political side of the question has been clarified." And, "the interest which has been aroused by these recommendations is not confined to operational or purely military technical matters. The idea which underlies the expositions made by the highest



German military authorities can not but inspire joy in Finland's martial soul ..."

The remainder of the memo dealt with the projected utilization of Finnish forces in the prospective war.<sup>57</sup> On 3 June Kinzel and Buschenhagen met with Heinrichs. The Finnish General Staff, after considerable study and integration of information culled from the May Salzburg-Berlin meetings, revealed its plans. The main Finnish forces would be concentrated in such a manner that, in accordance with OKH wishes, an attack could be launched either east or west of Lake Ladoga with five days notice. An attack east of the lake, which the Finns recognized as the most strategically advantageous, could be opened with a force of five infantry divisions and one infantry/cavalry division. Seven divisions would be employed as they later became available. The Svir River was the objective, but it would be achieved only under extremely favorable conditions.<sup>58</sup> The Finnish General Staff agreed to allow the III Corps to participate under German command in Polarfuchs.<sup>59</sup> Buschenhagen suggested that the Finnish units need not go beyond the 1939 boundary, but Heinrichs stated that no such limitation was necessary.<sup>60</sup> The Finns agreed to isolate Hanko utilizing one division and to occupy the Aaland chain with a single regiment.<sup>61</sup> The Finns, further, agreed to the early landing of the 169th Division at Finnish ports; however, they requested that SS-Nord in Kirkenes not commence transit to Rovaniemi until B-Tag.<sup>62</sup> Command in the south was accepted by Mannerheim; von Falkenhorst would be in command north of the rivers Ulo and Ulojoki.<sup>63</sup> The Finns agreed to the use of the Helsinki and Kemi airfields, along with other specified fields, for staging German combat missions.<sup>64</sup> Kinzel was informed that on 10 June Finland would mobilize the Ivalo battalion in Petsamo and the Finnish antiaircraft units for the ports and the frontier troops; on 15 June the III Corps and the forces for the Hanko and Aaland operations would be mobilized; on 18 June, it was estimated, the general mobilization order would be issued.<sup>65</sup> Kinzel proposed that a liaison staff be created in Helsinki for exchange of intelligence and the handling of details on transit and joint procedure. This was to take place as soon as possible due to the im-



minent threat of war; the Finnish General Staff took this matter under study.<sup>66</sup> Heinrichs noted also, in passing, that Mannerheim wished the Finnish SS recruits returned for integration within the Finnish Army.<sup>67</sup> In concluding the meeting, Heinrichs "warned with deep earnestness against any attempt to set up any kind of Quisling government which would immediately paralyze any further cooperation between Finland and Germany."<sup>68</sup>

Finland's concern extended beyond her tacit "alliance with the powerful" to maintaining the proper fictions. The Finnish authorities were obsessed with creating the appearance of a defensive war. The Finns steadfastly refused to engage in the war unless the Soviet Union attacked Finland, in which case "the Finnish people were unanimously resolved to ... defeat the Soviet forces."<sup>69</sup> The sole Finnish precondition for cooperation; the Finnish Army could not initiate hostilities nor would they allow initial OKW strikes to be launched from Finnish territory. After listening to Heinrichs explain how the Finnish population found aggressive war unpalatable, Kinzel noted bluntly that "Finland would therefore welcome it if the German operations [Barbarossa] were begun first and hopes that it will be provoked into an attack by the Russians."<sup>70</sup> The Reich anticipated no difficulties on this point. Except for limited air strikes and naval minelaying, operations in the north would not begin for several days after B-Tag; during these days there would be German troops massing on Finnish soil, the Hanko base would be blockaded by a Finnish division, the Aaland Islands would be remilitarized by Finland, and the Finnish Army would be in the process of full mobilization. The Soviets were sure to institute some form of preventive strike; Finland would have its "casus belli." On 4 June Buschenhagen signalled Jodl that "Finland is now ready for full cooperation."<sup>71</sup> On the same day he informed AOK Norwegen that Blaufuchs could commence.<sup>72</sup> Kinzel and Buschenhagen departed Helsinki on 6 June.

The massive troop movements that comprised Blaufuchs followed Buschenhagen's signal within the day; AOK Norwegen readied itself.<sup>73</sup> On 5 June transport ships

conveying the 169th Division departed Stettin for Oulu; ships carrying the staff of Gen.Kdo. XXXVI departed Oslo bound for Oulu.<sup>74</sup> SS-Kampfgruppe Nord, having barely completed its assembly at Kirkenes on 6 June, began its move south on 7 June.<sup>75</sup> Elements of the 3rd Geb.Div. were moved into position along the Finnish-Norwegian border; by 17 June the Gebirgskorps was ready. The transit/supply system in Finland, administered by separate OKL and OKH staffs and numbering six hundred ninety-five OKL and eight hundred thirty-eight OKH troops, was placed under the command of "Heimatstab Nord" in June. Gebirgskorps Norwegen was to draw its supplies from a cache in Narvik considered sufficient for one years operations. The forces for Polarfuchs were initially provided with rations for three months, ammunition for two to three months, fuel for two months.<sup>76</sup> It was anticipated that by this time Polarfuchs and Platinfuchs would have been successfully concluded.

The concentration of German forces in Finland revealed serious problems with respect to supply and transport and communications. From its Oslo headquarters AOK Norwegian had several routes of access to Finland, all tenuous: the sea route around the Polar coast to Kirkenes and Petsamo, vulnerable to Soviet and British naval action and within range of Soviet artillery at the entrance to Liinahamari harbor; Reichstrasse 50 from Narvik to Kirkenes, suffering from the lack of adequate snow-removal equipment and an all-weather surface; rail routes through Sweden, conditional upon Swedish transit permission; the Baltic Sea route, but the Finnish ports were of low capacity and icebound for four to five months annually.<sup>77</sup> Lines of communication and supply in Finland were equally problematic. One single-track railway ran from Oulu to Kemi to Rovaniemi, with a connecting line to Tornio. Rolling stock was scarce; Norwegian and German equipment was not compatible with Finnish gauge; lack of shunting yards and railway personnel created delays in unloading; Finnish engines burned wood and thus their hauling capability was low.<sup>78</sup> Despite all improvements and expedients, the Finnish rail system imposed a limit on any large scale offensive development. The road net



was equally poor. The road system was thin; few roads were surfaced and few bridges could support military equipment. Beyond the Soviet border, only five east-west roads were suitable, due to the close nature of the terrain, for the offensive operations - the Kotshkoma-Rukajärvi road, the Kem-Ukhta-Suomussalmi road, the Louhi-Kestenga-Kuusamo road, the Kandalaksha-Alakurti-Salla road, the "Russian" Konivo-Titovka road.<sup>79</sup> The almost absolute lack of suitable roads and the character of the virgin terrain in the north, along with the shortage of forces and lack of unified command, contributed much to the failure of the German offensives.<sup>80</sup>

On 6 June OKW issued its final timetable for Barbarossa. This document noted the need to camouflage the attack applied only until 18 June, after which the OKW assumed that the Soviets would unequivocally perceive the shape of the movements. It noted that 1300 hours on 21 June was the latest time the operation could be cancelled. The codeword for cancellation was designated ALTONA; the word DORTMUND would signal that Barbarossa would proceed. The timetable specified 0330 as H-hour for the crossing of Soviet frontiers by the Wehrmacht and the initial Luftwaffe strikes. On 14 June, during a final day-long briefing of his forty-five senior front-line commanders at the Reich Chancellery, Hitler advanced H-hour to 0300 of 22 June.<sup>81</sup> On that day von Falkenhorst reported that Platinfuchs would commence on B+7 (seven days after B-Tag) and Polarfuchs on B+9.<sup>82</sup> On 17 June, the Barbarossa timetable was reconfirmed by the OKW.

On 11 June, after the June Buschenhagen-Kinzel visit, AOK Norwegen issued a supplement to its April order integrating the Finnish units and operational orders for the Finnish III Corps. The III Corps was to provide offensive flank security south of the Gen.Kdo. XXXVI zone. It was to attack from the vicinity of Suomussalmi via Ukhta toward Kem with its main force and send a secondary force from Ukhta via Kestenga to Luokhi. The Finnish 6th Division, advancing from the vicinity of Kuusamo, would turn northeastward behind Salla toward the Tuntsa River near Alakurti. The III Corps would be under the direct command of B.Finn.



at Rovaniemi.<sup>83</sup>

During the May and June conferences mention had been made of establishment of an OKH Liaison Staff Nord. On 7 June the OKW approved the dispatch of the OKH nominee, General Waldemar Erfurth, as commandant of such a staff.<sup>84</sup> On 11 June Halder recorded that Erfurth had been ordered north to deal with all operative and personnel questions in Helsinki.<sup>85</sup> On the afternoon of 13 June, Erfurth and Buschenhagen arrived by commercial plane at Helsinki.<sup>86</sup> Erfurth was immediately attached to Mannerheim's headquarters as the OKH representative. However, Erfurth and his staff, at Mannerheim's request, were "not to don uniform until the commencement of war."<sup>87</sup>

On 9 June Ryti informed his cabinet that there was considerable likelihood of a Soviet-Nazi war within two weeks, without mentioning Finland's probable role in the coming conflict.<sup>88</sup> In this situation there seemed no choice but to order partial mobilization; the order for mobilization of reservists for border security units was issued on 9 June.<sup>89</sup> The uncompleted fortified positions were occupied. The mobilization was done without public announcement or alarm. The troops were called to the colors by individual notices. On 10 June the first thirty thousand reservists were issued mobilization notices.<sup>90</sup> On 10 June Heinrichs informed Rossing of the partial mobilization and that full mobilization was projected for 16 June; to avoid disorganization this date should not be modified.<sup>91</sup> On 13 June the Finnish parliament was informed of the move by Witting.<sup>92</sup> Finally, on 14 June von Schulenburg in Moscow reported that he had learned of the Finnish mobilization order; the AA was informed.<sup>93</sup>

Buschenhagen, who had arrived with Erfurth, on 13 June established B.Finn. at Rovaniemi.<sup>94</sup> In order to avoid attracting Soviet attention von Falkenhorst remained in Norway.<sup>95</sup> In the interim, Colonel G. Muller commanded German forces from B.Finn. On the day its mobilization orders were issued, the Finnish III Corps under General Siilasvuuo was placed under the command of von Falkenhorst. Siilasvuuo, while mobilization took place, was to repel "possible military opera-

tions from the east into Finnish territory."<sup>96</sup> Mannerheim ordered Siilasvuo to establish contact with the Field Marshal if he should receive German operational orders.<sup>97</sup> On 16 June B.Finn. presented Siilasvuo with these orders. The Finnish divisions were to advance on the right flank of the Polarfuchs operation, striking along the Kemijarvi railway line to the junction with the Murmansk railway. The date for commencing operations was left unspecified.<sup>98</sup>

In reaction to Erfurth's arrival, on 15 June the Finnish General Staff proposed that a Finnish liaison officer be attached to the OKH in Germany.<sup>99</sup> On 16 June the proposal was accepted by the OKH. General Harald Ohquist was designated to occupy this post and on 20 June was presented to Halder at Zossen. During this brief meeting, Ohquist placed the wishes of the Finnish High Command on the OKH record. He stated that Mannerheim desired the return of Siilasvuo's forces at the earliest possible moment, that Finland could complete preparations in seven days after notice was transmitted for the main Finnish advance, that the advance would move east of Lake Ladoga. Further, he noted the serious food shortage in Finland and reported that mobilization had begun on 18 June.<sup>100</sup>

At this stage of preparation, the Finnish General Staff suddenly exhibited concern over the prospect of a diplomatic settlement that would leave Finland unsupported. On 12 June Rossing reported that the Finnish military wished to know if there was a peaceful solution still possible.<sup>101</sup> On 14 June Erfurth and Buschenhagen visited Mannerheim, who declared that he could delay general mobilization until he had a firm commitment that there would be war or alternately, a commitment that in the case of a negotiated settlement Finland's territorial desires would be fulfilled. An answer was expected by noon, 15 June.<sup>102</sup> Erfurth promised to contact the OKH; Buschenhagen, the OKW. Buschenhagen was ordered to inform the Finnish officers, by the Fuhrer's personal order, that the first alternative could be counted on "with certainty."<sup>103</sup> Keitel authorized the Military Attache DGH to state that "the demands and conditions raised by Finland concerning the measures to be taken are to be regarded as fulfilled."<sup>104</sup> Erfurth advised



Heinrichs of the Fuhrer's view. The general mobilization was ordered to commence on 17 June.

On 17 June Adolf Hitler issued the final terse order to proceed with Barbarossa.<sup>105</sup>

Events accelerated. On 16 June Finnish frontier zones were evacuated, sixty thousand citizens being shifted, and the mining of these zones begun.<sup>106</sup> On 17 June, the same day that Finland declared her "political connection with the League of Nations broken,"<sup>107</sup> the general mobilization orders were issued. "The troops were given strict orders to avoid any action which could give the Soviets an excuse for alleging provocation."<sup>108</sup> Also on 17 June, a German E-boat and minelayer flotilla under Captain Butow arrived in Finnish harbors on the southern coast.<sup>109</sup> The same day Finland received an AA warning to halt any further sailing of merchant ships to Soviet ports. On 17 June the date and hour of B-Tag were inadvertently revealed to the Finns by a field order from B.Finn. authorizing active reconnaissance of Soviet territory to commence as of 2:30 a.m. on 22 June. Later that day, the Finnish High Command issued operational orders for the Aaland occupation, to occur as B-Tag dawned.<sup>110</sup> On 17 June Kampfgruppe Nord was upgraded to a division with the designation SS-Division Nord; at this time a divisional supply staff, a reconnaissance unit, an antiaircraft battery, medical and communications units were added and the new division was reinforced for Polarfuchs by SS-Infantry Regiment 9 and SS-Totenkopf-Standarte K.<sup>111</sup>

On 18 June the orders for the main Finnish offensive were formalized. These plans, while not inconsistent with the wishes of the OKH, were not entirely in accord with the spirit of the previous German-Finnish discussions, which was that the Finnish forces should be held for commitment either east or west of Lake Ladoga. Further, Heinrichs had often implied that the Finnish General Staff preferred an offensive to the east, while these orders detailed an offensive directed westerly.<sup>112</sup> Certainly the OKH still believed that the Finnish advance was to be eastward. Directive 33, issued on 19 June, stated "It remains the task of the



main Finnish forces, reinforced by most of the 163rd Division, to attack the enemy opposing them with the main weight of attack east of Lake Ladoga and, later, in conjunction with Army Group North, to destroy them."<sup>113</sup> On the same day Erfurth expressed to Heinrichs the OKH concern that the creation of a force capable of striking north and east of Lake Ladoga was being neglected by the Finnish command. It was; Mannerheim favored the "Hiitola" offensive and was committing his troops to its pursuit. Erfurth received no explanation. The Field Marshal listened politely to Erfurth's requests, but pursued his own plans.<sup>114</sup> The problems inherent in separate commands were a reality. Mannerheim intended to go to war along side the Reich, but he would use his own methods and only for the objectives he preferred.

The OKM and OKL preparations proceeded rapidly. On 17 June German naval vessels undertook the direct defense of Finnish territorial waters in the Baltic. In the far north, the OKM predicted that shipping along the Arctic coast must be halted until Soviet supremacy could be overcome. The occupation of Polarnyy and Murmansk appeared the most likely means of reducing the effectiveness of Soviet naval forces; Grand Admiral Raeder had long insisted on the occupation of Murmansk as one of the prime requirements of the OKM.<sup>115</sup> In Kirkenes were some six hundred OKM personnel for the creation of Sea Command T, Murmansk-Teriberka command, when the port was cleared by AOK Norwegen.<sup>116</sup> Naval operations began immediately; during the nights 18-19 June, 19-20 June, and 20-21 June the German minelayers "Preussen", "Grille", "Skagerrak", and "Versailles" together with six craft of the 6th MS Flotilla laid the minefields Wartburg I-III, one thousand one hundred fifty contact mines and one thousand eight hundred explosive floats, between Memel and Oland. Finnish minelayers laid fields on 21 June near Manni and Jussaro.<sup>117</sup> On 18 June Luftflotte V was ordered by OKW to support Gebirgskorps Norwegen and B.Finn. with the services of one fighter squadron, one Stuka flight, one bomber squadron Ju88, and one reconnaissance flight. Again dispersal of effort resulted, for the OKL was ordered to attack the Soviet Arctic Fleet, Soviet Arctic ports,

the Murmansk railway, the White Sea Canal, the Soviet air force and its airbases, provide ground support for Polarfuchs and Platinfuchs, and maintain aerial reconnaissance over the Finnish-Norwegian border and the Soviet-Finnish border.<sup>118</sup> By 21 June forty-two Stukas, along with a fighter squadron and a long-range reconnaissance squadron were in Kirkenes. A reconnaissance flight was located forward at Finnish bases.<sup>119</sup> FBK Kirkenes was brought to full activation. Antiaircraft units included one mixed antiaircraft battery at Banak and one heavy battery and one light battery at Kirkenes. The Finnish fields at Petsamo, Rovaniemi, and the tactical base at Kemijarvi were stockpiled for OKL use. Liaison was to be supplied through Erfurth's staff.<sup>120</sup>

All of the Finnish and German military activity did not, of course, go unnoticed by the Soviets. On 19 June P.G. Orlov concluded that a Nazi attack was imminent and so warned S.I. Kabanov, the commanding officer of the Hanko base.<sup>121</sup> On the same day, the Soviet military attache and Orlov evacuated their families from villas near the Hanko base.<sup>122</sup> However, the concern displayed by Orlov, and many other lesser Soviet officials and officers, was not shared by their superiors. Little was done to prepare for the German onslaught.<sup>123</sup>

As 21 June dawned, the German and Finnish forces were in position: the Finnish IV Corps under Lieutenant General Oesch with its right flank on the Gulf of Finland and its left on Vuoksi (the 8th, 10th, 12th and 4th Divisions); the Finnish II Corps under Major General Laatikainen between Vuoksi and Pyhajarvi (the 2nd, 18th, and 15th Divisions); the "Karelian Army" under Lieutenant General Heinrichs consisting of the Finnish VII Corps under Major General Hagglund between Pyhajarvi and Vartsila (the 19th and 7th Divisions), the Finnish VI Corps under Major General Talvela between Vartsila and Korpiselkä (the 11th and 5th Divisions and 1st Jager Brigade), Group "Oinonen" in the area of Ilomantsi (the Finnish Cavalry Brigade and 2nd Jager Brigade), and the Finnish 1st Division as a reserve; the Finnish 14th Division in the region of Lieksa; the German 163rd Division in the area of Joensuu to serve as a general reserve;<sup>124</sup> the Finnish 17th Division

facing Hanko; in the Suomussalmi-Kuusamo region the Finnish III Corps under Major General Siilasvuo (the 3rd and 6th Divisions); German Gen.Kdo. XXXVI under General Feige in the Kemijarvi region (the 169th Division and SS-Division Nord);<sup>125</sup> the German Gebirgskorps Norwegian in the region around Kirkenes.<sup>126</sup>

On 21 June, at one p.m., the Fuhrer authorized the flash of "Dortmund". In the afternoon Erfurth presented, officially, Heinrichs with the information that German operations would commence on 22 June. The Finnish Chief of the General Staff was, according to Erfurth, visibly surprised.<sup>127</sup> One would have imagined that the time of such surprises was long past.

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Footnotes---

1. Heinl, op.cit., p.8.
2. Ibid, p.79.
3. IMT, vol.VII, p.311.
4. AA DGFP, vol.XII, pp.879-880.
5. Ibid, vol.XII, pp.879-880. All major sources - Greiner, Hess, Erfurth, Holter, OKW KTB - mention the 25 May meeting in passing. Two extensive reports of proceedings survived the war, the AA report on microfilm M175/M005544-53 (also found in AA DGFP, vol.XII, pp.880-885) and the OKW report, on T-312/1011/9206447-56. "Protokoll der Besprechung mit den Vertretern der finnischen Wehrmacht am 25.5.41 in Salzburg."
6. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.256.
7. Mannerheim, op.cit., p.407.
8. Jalanti, op.cit., p.293.
9. Mannerheim, op.cit., p.407.
10. AA DGFP, vol.XII, p.880.
11. Ibid, vol.XII, p.880.
12. Mannerheim, op.cit., p.407.
13. AA DGFP, vol.XII, p.880.
14. This represented a departure from earlier German intentions, expressed as



late as 28 April in a preliminary plan, to offer the overall command in Finland to Mannerheim. "The reasons for the decision to institute separate commands are not clear. One, probably, was the desire of OKW to command in an active theater. Another might have been the fact that Mannerheim could be brought into the planning only at a very late stage, too late for him to assume command at the start of Barbarossa. Probably too, in the prevailing optimism it was not thought possible that a situation could develop which would undermine the Finnish will to collaborate. Also for a short victorious campaign in which Finland was only expected to stage a diversion on the outer flank, a tight integration of the Finnish forces was not necessary and could entail unwanted obligations with respect to reinforcements and supplies ... What was serious was that the Germans, when they established independent German and Finnish commands, compounding their more basic error by failing to bring Mannerheim under their direct control by preliminary agreement and so lost all hope of keeping him in hand and laid themselves open to the danger of coalition warfare." Ziemke, op.cit., pp.133-134.

15. AA DGFP, vol.XII, p.881.

16. Ibid, vol.XII, p.881.

17. Ibid, vol.XII, pp.881-882. The OKW/OKH referred to the Finnish V Corps as the Finnish III Corps throughout. This German designation, for simplicity's sake, will be retained.

18. AA DGFP, vol.XII, p.882.

19. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.257.

20. Erfurth, op.cit., pp.30-31.

21. AA DGFP, vol.XII, pp.882-883.

22. Ibid, vol.XII, p.883.

23. Ibid, vol.XII, pp.883-884.

24. Ibid, vol.XII, p.884.

25. Ibid, vol.XII, p.884.

26. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.257.

27. Mannerheim, op.cit., pp.407-408.

28. William Bodewin J.G. Keitel, The Memoirs of Field-Marshal Keitel (London: William Kimber and Co. Ltd., 1965), p.156.

29. AA GDFFP, vol.XII, pp.881-882.

30. Ibid, vol.XII, p.882.

31. Ibid, vol.XII, pp.882-883.

32. Ibid, vol.XII, pp.883-884.

33. Ibid, vol.XII, p.884.

34. Ibid, vol.XII, p.884.

35. Ibid, vol.XII, pp.884-885.
36. T-312/1011/9206447-56. "Protokoll der Besprechung mit den Vertretern der finnischen Wehrmacht am 25.5.41 in Salzburg."
37. IMT, vol.VII, p.312.
38. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.429.
39. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.258.
40. Erfurth, op.cit., p.32.
41. Jalanti, op.cit., p.298.
42. Mannerheim, op.cit., p.408.
43. Jalanti, op.cit., pp.298-299.
44. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.429.
45. Jalanti, op.cit., p.299.
46. Ziemke, op.cit., p.133.
47. Jalanti, op.cit., pp.299-300.
48. Erfurth, op.cit., p.33.
49. T-312/1011/9206445. Telegram addressed "AOK Norwegen-Herrn. Oberstlt. v. Buttlar."
50. AA DGFP, vol.XII, p.885.
51. Jalanti, op.cit., p.300.
52. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.253.
53. Bender and Taylor, op.cit., pp.148-151.
54. Wuorinen, op.cit., pp.99-100.
55. Ibid, p.100.
56. IMT, vol.VII, p.312.
57. T-312/1011/9206345-47. Untitled, undated, without OKW/OKH reference number.
58. Ziemke, op.cit., p.134.
59. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.447; OKW KTB, vol.I, p.1210.
60. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.264.
61. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.447; OKW KTB, vol.I, p.401.
62. Greiner, op.cit., p.387.

63. IMT, vol.VII, p.312.
64. Jalanti, op.cit., p.306.
65. AA DGFP, vol.XII, p.963.
66. Jalanti, op.cit., p.305.
67. Ibid, p.309. In mid-July 1941, a contingent of four hundred twenty-one Finns were absorbed by SS-Division Wiking for active duty. Bender and Taylor, op.cit., p.137.
68. AA DGFP, vol.XII, p.963.
69. Erfurth, op.cit., p.34.
70. Krosby, op.cit., p.175.
71. AA DGFP, vol.XII, p.963.
72. Ibid, vol.XII, p.963.
73. AOK Norwegen was deployed at this time as follows: the 163rd Division and a Panzer-abteilung in Oslo; the 69th, 199th, and 214th Divisions under Gen.Kdo. XXXVI in south Norway; under Gen.Kdo. XXXIII in Drontheim the 181st and 196th Divisions; the 2nd and 3rd Geb.Div. and SS-Nord in the Finnmark region. The 710th Sicherrungs-Division was arriving in Oslo to replace the 163rd Division for operations in Barbarossa. Greiner, op.cit., pp.387-388.
74. Between 7 June and 10 June, thirty-eight transports offloaded in the Finnish ports; thirty-six more transports arrived between 11 June and 21 June. Wuorinen, op.cit., p.103.
75. Ziemke, op.cit., p.137.
76. Ibid, p.138.
77. Ibid, pp.139-140.
78. U.S. Army, Warfare in the Far North (Washington: Department of the Army, 1951), pp.12-13. This pamphlet was prepared by W. Erfurth at the U.S. Army Interrogation Enclosure at Neustadt in 1947.
79. U.S. Army, op.cit., p.9. The regions away from these roads, entirely remote from any traffic, remained completely untouched by the war although minor flank-ing operations were occasionally carried out by Soviet partisans and Finnish Sissi.
80. In relation to this, three points could be made. 1) The natural conditions along the frontier and the negligible development of roads were not suited to operations with large masses of troops of low mobility. 2) The characteristics of terrain and climate were such that winter was the more favorable season for offensive campaigns and summer more suitable for defensive operations. 3) The spring and fall constitute muddy periods when the use of roads temporarily ceased or was greatly curtailed.
81. Whaley, op.cit., pp.19-20.



82. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.455.
83. Ziemke, op.cit., p.131.
84. AA DGFP, vol.XII, p.881.
85. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.451.
86. Ziemke, op.cit., p.135.
87. Lundin, op.cit., p.280.
88. Mazour, op.cit., p.141.
89. Mannerheim, op.cit., p.410.
90. Blucher, op.cit., p.224.
91. Jalanti, op.cit., p.321.
92. AA DGFP, vol.XII, p.1023.
93. Ibid, vol.XII, p.1023. Halder noted on 10 June that the mobilization schedule decreed - reinforce border security, 10-13 June; for Hanko and Aaland operations troops prepared, 12-20 June; III Corps mobilization, 15-25 June; remaining forces mobilization, 16-28 June. Halder KTB, vol. II, p.449.
94. Ziemke, op.cit., p.135.
95. He arrived at Rovaniemi on 21 June 1941.
96. Hess, op.cit., p.162.
97. Mannerheim, op.cit., p.411.
98. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, pp.274-275.
99. Ziemke, op.cit., p.135.
100. Halder KTB, vol.II, p.258. On 18 June Schnurre reported to the AA that the Fuhrer had decided to send approximately thirty thousand tons of grain to Finland to alleviate the deficiency. AA DGFP, vol.XII, p.1050.
101. Krosby, op.cit., p.176.
102. AA DGFP, vol.XII, p.1038.
103. Krosby, op.cit., p.176.
104. Ziemke, op.cit., pp.133-134.
105. OKW KTB, vol.I, p.1212.
106. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.278.
107. Meiksins, op.cit., p.189.
108. Mannerheim, op.cit., p.411.

109. Erfurth, op.cit., p.35.
110. Shirer, op.cit., p.340.
111. Bender and Taylor, op.cit., p.148.
112. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.278.
113. Trevor-Roper, op.cit., p.88. It should be noted that in mid-June General Engelbrecht, commander of the 163rd Division, had presented himself to Heinrichs in Helsinki and announced that his forces were prepared to carry out the seizure of Hanko. Heinrichs was stunned, for this course had often been suggested by the Finnish General Staff and as often refused by OKW/OKH. It was decided that, since Finnish deployment to isolate Hanko was complete, some other suitable task should be found for the German division. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.280.
114. Ibid, p.279.
115. Ziemke, op.cit., p.131.
116. Hess, op.cit., p.38.
117. J. Rohwer and G. Hummelchen, Chronology of the War at Sea 1939-1945 (London: Ian Allen Ltd., 1972), p.108. The joint naval strength in the Arctic and Baltic theaters consisted of: two German battleships (Schleswig-Holstein class), two Finnish coastal armored cruisers, eleven German and four Finnish minelayers, twenty-nine German and twelve Finnish minesweepers, five German and five Finnish submarines, twenty German and eighteen Finnish patrol gunboats, and forty German and seven Finnish attack motorboats. Leach, op.cit., p.273.
118. Hess, op.cit., pp.37-38.
119. Ministry of Defense of the USSR, The Soviet Air Force in World War II, The Official History (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1973), p.30.
120. The OKL supplied the following support: 1st Strategic Recon Squadron, 120th Recon Group and 1st Tactical Recon Squadron, 32nd Recon Group at Kirkenes; 5th Squadron, 30th Bomber Wing at Banak; 4th Stuka Group, 1st Air Wing at Kirkenes; 13th Squadron, 77th Fighter Wing and one swarm (6 aircraft) from 76th Twin-Engine Fighter Wing at Kirkenes. Plocher, op.cit., p.190.
121. Ibid, pp.190-191.
122. Whaley, op.cit., pp.119-120.
123. For an exquisite study of the near total tactical and strategic surprise attained by Barbarossa, see Whaley, Codeword BARBAROSSA.
124. Schnurre had, in June, travelled to Stockholm to negotiate transit for the 163rd Division. Schnurre was able to report that on B-Tag or shortly after B-Tag transit would be permitted.
125. On 18 June these units moved from assembly areas around Rovaniemi toward their initial positions near the Soviet-Finnish border. Jalanti, op.cit., p.322.
126. Erfurth, op.cit., pp.44-45.

127. Jalanti, op.cit., pp.322-323.



Conclusion: June 1941

"When the situation is obscure, attack." - Heinz Guderian.<sup>1</sup>

"In war there is never any chance for a second mistake." - Lemachus.<sup>2</sup>

At 3:00 a.m. on a cool Sunday, the Soviet envoy Dekanov and V.M. Berezchkov were summoned to the Wilhelmstrasse. There von Ribbentrop informed them that the German government regarded the existing situation at the Soviet-Nazi borders as a threat to Germany. The situation was taken by the Fuhrer as evidence of the Soviet Union's intention to stab the German people in the back. The Fuhrer's decision was final; German troops, as a defensive measure, had crossed the border into the Soviet Union.<sup>3</sup> Von Schulenburg delivered the same message to Molotov at dawn in the Kremlin.

At 2:30 a.m. on 22 June, elements of Gebirgskorp Norwegen crossed the border, the 2nd Geb.Div. taking up positions in the Liinahamari-Petsamo region and the 3rd Geb.Div. along a line extending south to the vicinity of Luostari.<sup>4</sup> Finnish units in the area were to automatically be placed under the authority of the Gebirgskorps.<sup>5</sup> The Soviet naval base at Hanko was attacked by OKL aircraft from the south at dawn.<sup>6</sup> In the afternoon the German minelayer group Nord under Commander von Schonermark (the 2nd MTB Flotilla, 5th MMS Flotilla, 1st MTB Flotilla, and 3rd MTB Flotilla) laid mines along the Soviet Baltic coastal waters. The Finnish submarines "Iku Turso", "Vetehinen", and "Vesihiisi" took up OKM-assigned stations in the gulf.<sup>7</sup> In the evening hours, AOK Norwegen ordered Platinfuchs launched on 29 June and Polarfuchs initiated on 1 July, with the Finnish III Corps crossing the border at 0200 and the German divisions at 1600 hours.<sup>8</sup> Staggered timing of the strikes was employed for the purpose of making maximum air support available for the initial assault in each sector. Hitler was able to announce, with all honesty, that "United with their Finnish comrades, the fighters of the

victory at Narvik are standing in the Northern Arctic. German divisions commanded by the conqueror of Norway, in cooperation with the heroes of Finnish freedom under their Marshal, are protecting Finnish soil."<sup>9</sup> Nor were the Finnish forces idle. The occupation of the Aaland Islands functioned smoothly and was complete by 9:30 a.m. At Hanko Soviet aircraft attacked Finnish shipping in local waters and the Red Army batteries there opened fire on Finnish targets at 6:50 a.m. Finnish batteries were authorized to counter-battery. Von Blucher reported to the AA that Soviet bombers had struck at the Finnish island of Alskar and the Finnish warships "Jemari" and "Vainamoinen".<sup>10</sup> The Finnish navy's request to be allowed to lay mines in Soviet waters, however, was refused by Mannerheim's headquarters. The Finnish High Command set the date for the "Hiitola" offensive for 28 June. The closing move of the day was an order to stop Soviet transits to Hanko, on some suitable pretext.<sup>11</sup>

On 24 June Finland agreed to permit German aircraft to take off from Finnish territory for operations against Soviet objectives and to permit ground reconnaissance by AOK Norwegen units across the Soviet-Finnish border. On 24 June, with AG Nord operations proceeding on schedule, the OKH instructed Erfurth to inform the Finns that they were to prepare for an operation east of Ladoga by at least six divisions with the weight of the attack on the left flank.<sup>12</sup> Molotov had already twice demanded confirmation of Finland's neutrality and accused Finland of firing on Hanko and of overflights of Leningrad.<sup>13</sup> On 25 June, by orders of a Stavka directive, aircraft of the Northern Front Air Force, of the Air Force of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet, and of the Air Force of the Northern Fleet struck at nineteen airfields in Finland and north Norway where were stationed units of the Luftwaffe and Finnish Air Force.<sup>14</sup> At the frontier, the Soviets opened with infantry and artillery fire.<sup>15</sup> On the evening of 25 June 1941, the Finnish parliament confirmed that Finland had again been forced into a defensive war. The Finnish troops were authorized to return fire, but were prohibited from crossing the frontier before midnight 28 June. The High Command headquarters were transferred

to Mikkeli.<sup>16</sup> The cycle was complete.

The German objectives were never attained; Murmansk was never occupied, the Murmansk railway was never effectively cut, AG Nord never linked with the Finnish Army at the Svir River, Leningrad never fell. Every German strategic objective in the north was unfulfilled. The failure can be traced to three reasons, all interlocking: the unnecessary division of command, the lack of sufficient forces and the dispersion of their efforts, the combat conditions - terrain, transportation net, climate - in the Finnish theater. If a unified command had been a reality, the offensive operations could have been mutually supportive in both timing and objective. If sufficient forces had been available, if the defense of Norway had not been an obsession, the advances would not have bogged down. If the forces that were available had not been scattered into several operations, one massive drive might well have reached its objectives. Given these two errors in planning, the quality of the Finnish front precluded any exploitation of local advantages gained during combat. And the terrain and the transport/supply system could not support blitzkrieg tactics. German military strategy in Finland must be rated a dismal failure.

"He conquers who endures." - Persius.<sup>17</sup>

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Footnotes---

1. Heinl, op.cit., p.21.
2. Ibid, p.193.
3. Bialer, op.cit., pp.216-217.
4. Ziemke, op.cit., p.139.
5. Dietl and Herrmann, op.cit., p.220.



6. Erfurth, op.cit., p.38.
7. Rohwer and Hummelchen, op.cit., pp.109-110.
8. Ziemke, op.cit., p.139.
9. Toynbee, op.cit., p.580.
10. AA DGFP, vol.XII, p.1079.
11. Upton, Finland in Crisis 1940-1941, p.283.
12. Ziemke, op.cit., p.136.
13. Mannerheim, op.cit., p.413.
14. USSR Ministry of Defense, op.cit., p.42.
15. Mannerheim, op.cit., p.413.
16. Ibid, p.414.
17. Heinl, op.cit., p.102.

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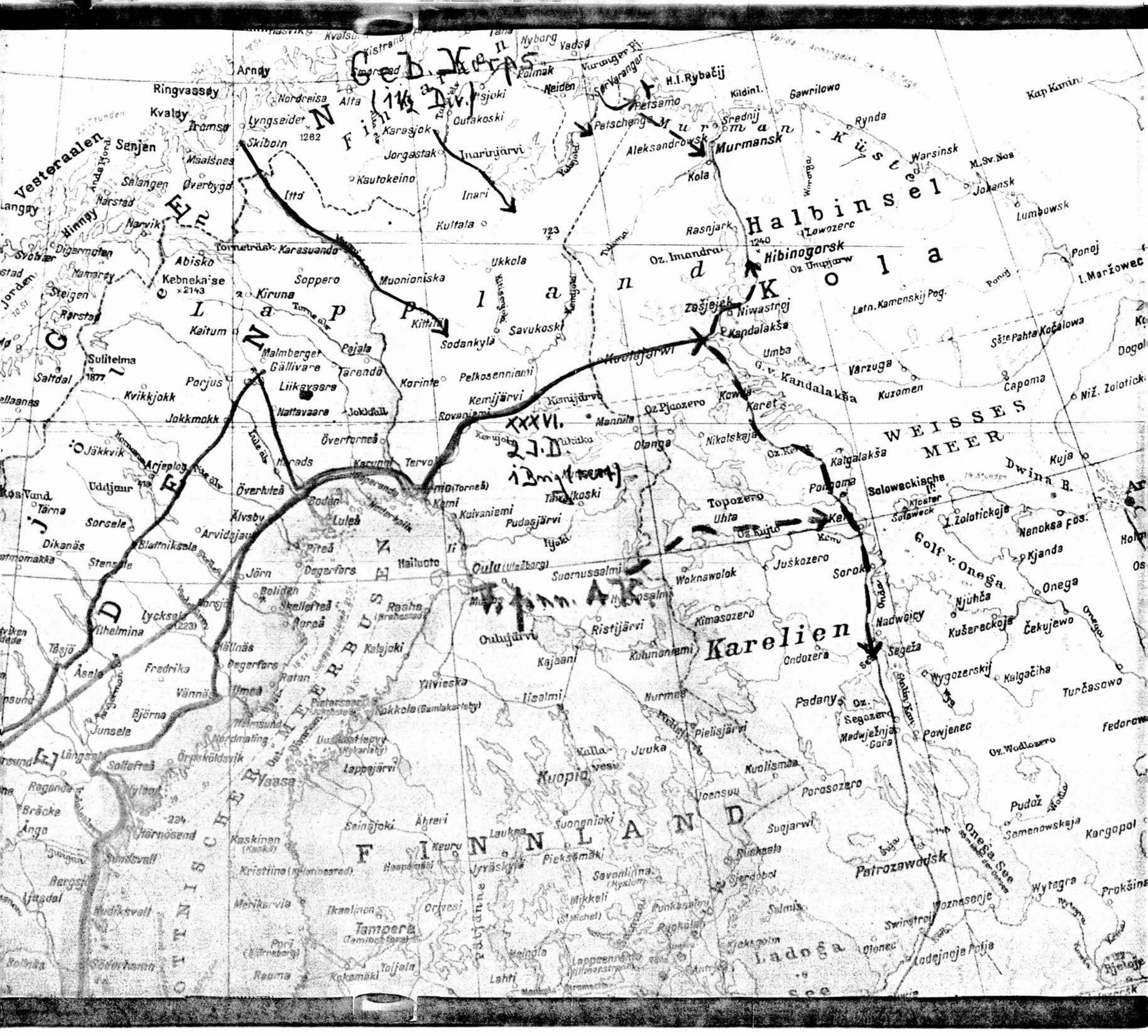
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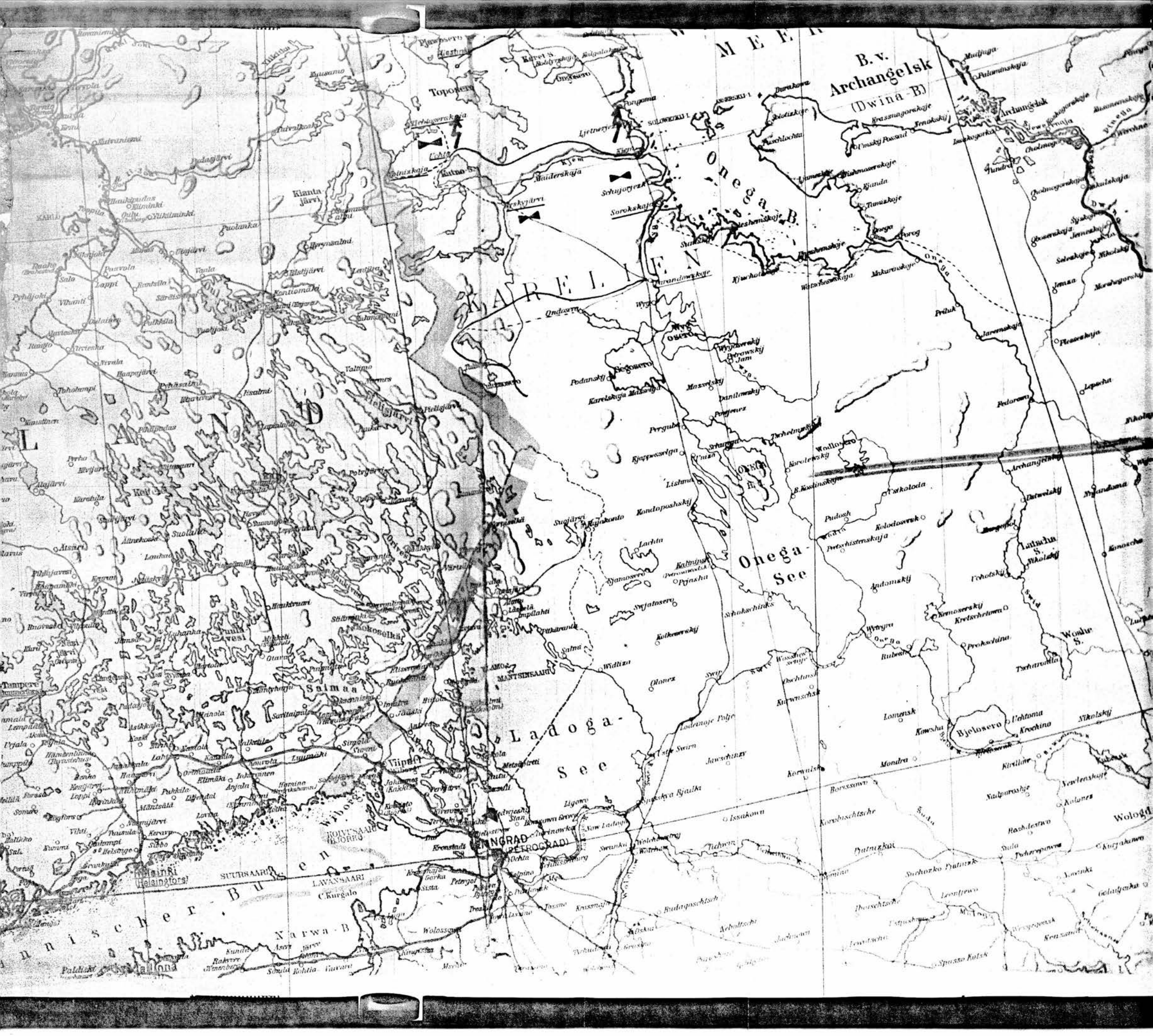
The following lists the OKW/OKH codename, the month in which first proposed, and a brief description of objectives for the operations of ACK Norwegen following B-Tag.

Renntier	August 1940	the occupation of and defense of the Petsamo region of Finland by forces under the command of Gebirgskorps Norwegen
Platinfuchs	December 1940	the offensive extension of Renntier; a strike at the Titovka-Murman coast-Murmansk region of Soviet Russia by forces under the command of Gebirgskorps Norwegen
Polarfuchs	December 1940	the initial strike in the Salla region of the Soviet Union and the extension of such an offensive in the direction of Kandalaksha by forces under the command of B.Finn (Rovaniemi)
Silberfuchs	December 1940	the covering codename for the Renntier, Polarfuchs, and Platinfuchs operations and all supportive troop movements and concentrations
Blaufuchs I	May 1941	the movement and concentration of OKW forces from northern Norway to the region round Rovaniemi
Blaufuchs II	May 1941	the movement and concentration of OKW forces from Germany via the Finnish Baltic ports to the region round Rovaniemi











# Karte 2

# Nordeuropa 1:2500000



Erläuterung:

# Eisenbahn

*im Bau*

**Straße**

im Bau oder Saumpfad

## Flugplatz

## Radiostation

